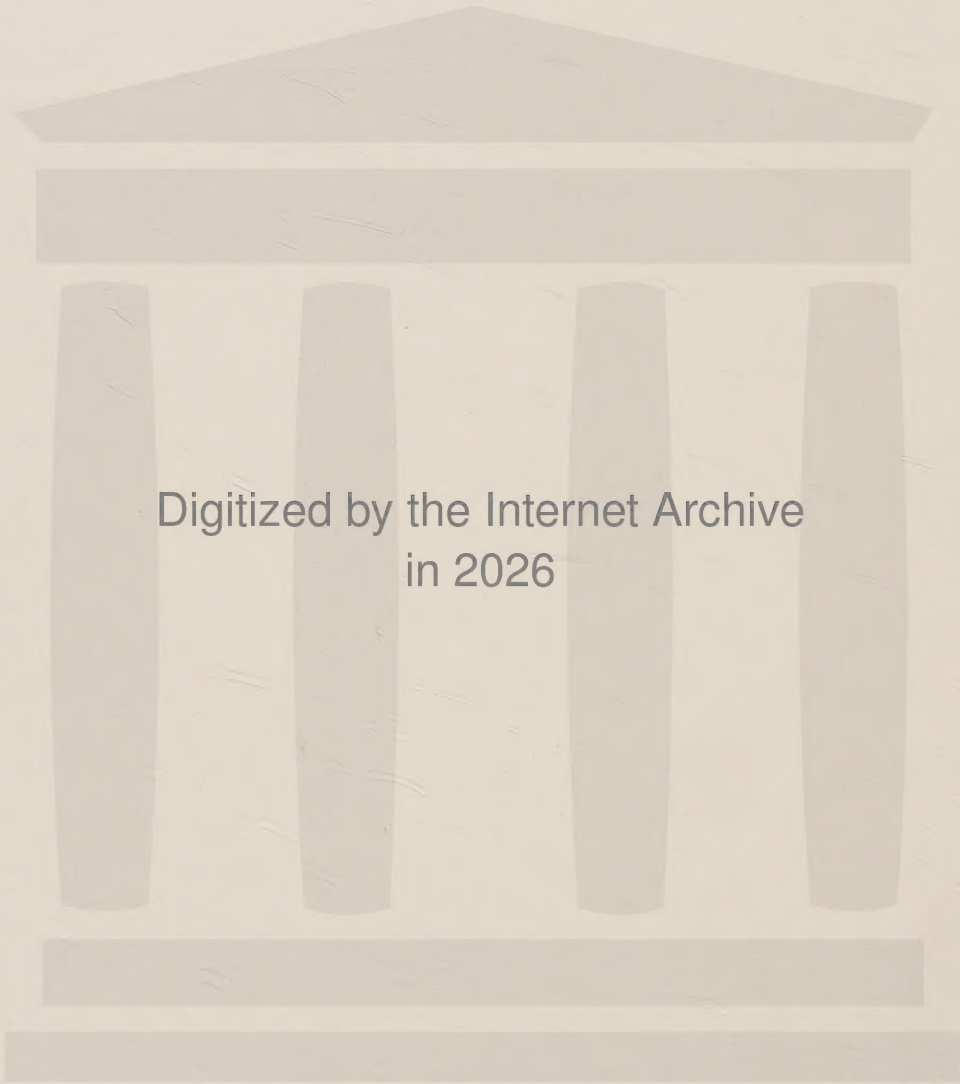
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THE STORY OF

IVANHOE

FOR CHILDREN

SIR WALTER SCOTT

THE STORY OF IVANHOE FOR CHILDREN

SIR WALTER SCOTT

THE
LEISURE
CIRCLE

Previously published by A & C Black Limited, 1899

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Publisher's Note

Some of the sentiments expressed in this book may cause offence to the modern reader. The publishers would like to emphasise that in reprinting this book they are in no way endorsing a number of the views therein.

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INTRODUCTION

The story of Ivanhoe is laid in the reign of Richard I., Cœur-de-Lion or the Lion-hearted, who was king of England from 1189 to 1199. In order to understand the tale, we must think of the state of the country in the latter part of the twelfth century.

For more than a hundred years, since the Norman Conquest in 1066, England had been under the rule of foreign kings—first the Normans, William the Conqueror and his two sons, then Stephen of Blois, and lastly Henry II. of Anjou, all originally from the north of France; and, as the kings had possessions abroad as well as in this country, they were as often in France as in England, and remained French in language, customs, and ideas. In the same way the descendants of the Conqueror's followers to whom he granted lands in England, in many cases also held lands abroad, and so were not likely to become thoroughly at home in their new possessions. The highest posts in the Church too, the Bishoprics and great Abbeys, were since the Conquest usually held by men of foreign birth or descent.

Thus it came about that for long after the Conquest there were two distinct classes in the country, really more like two separate nations—the upper classes, more Norman than English, and the middle and lower classes, who were of the Old English or Anglo-Saxon stock. In time the two became blended into one, and the nobles

gradually took to the English language, but not till they had introduced into it so many French words and expressions, which the rest of the population adopted. This we call English, keeping the name Anglo-Saxon for the old tongue as it was before the Conquest. But it was a long while before French ceased to be the language of the kings and their court, and to this day the Queen's assent is given to Acts of Parliament in Old French—'La reyne le veult' (the Queen wills it)—though the Acts themselves, of course, have long been written in English.

What hindered the union of the two races and languages for so long was, as we have said, the fact that the kings had large territories in France. These remained intact till John's reign, when Normandy was taken by the French; but even then there were large territories in the south of France, called generally Aquitaine, which were held to the days of Henry VI.

In this story we are in the time of Richard I., that is before the foreign possessions began to be lost; and so we find the two races still sharply distinguished. This is well brought out in the talk between Gurth and Wamba, the two Saxon serfs, which you find at the beginning of the tale. There were possibly some Saxons who still dreamed of getting rid of the foreigners and going back to the old days before the conquest, when England was held by the English alone.

Scott introduces us to a Saxon franklin, that is a sort of country squire, called Cedric, who is supposed to be almost the last of these dreamers. He has the guardianship of the lady Rowena, the heiress of an old Saxon family,

and it is his great ambition to marry her to Athelstane of Coningsburgh, who is supposed to be the last representative of the old Saxon kings. Then he hopes to raise these two to the throne, and to drive out the hated foreigners. But, unfortunately for his schemes, Rowena is in love with Cedric's son, Wilfred of Ivanhoe; and finding this out, Cedric, before the tale opens, has driven his son away and disinherited him, that is, declared him no longer his heir. The young man did what many a homeless youth did in those days. In a modern novel he would have perhaps gone to the gold mines of Australia, or sought his fortunes in America or South Africa. In those days the Crusades afforded the best opening for anyone who had his own fortunes to make.

The Crusades were wars undertaken to free Jerusalem from the Turks, who had conquered Palestine in the eleventh century, just about the same time that the Normans conquered England. The country had previously belonged to the Arabs, often called Saracens, who, like the Turks, were Mahometans. Now, it was the custom for Christians to go from all parts of Europe as pilgrims or palmers to visit the Holy Land, and particularly Our Lord's sepulchre at Jerusalem. The Arabs had allowed this; but the Turks, who were a half-savage race from Central Asia, were very cruel to the pilgrims, and their cruelties led to the Crusades. For two hundred years crusades were undertaken—sometimes successfully, but never for very long. The Third Crusade fell in Richard's time, and the King himself joined it; and amongst his followers was Wilfred, who so pleased the King that he

gave him an estate called Ivanhoe, which gives its name to the book.

The leaders of the Crusades were, beside Richard, the King of France, Philip II.; Leopold, Duke of Austria; and others. Though at first successful, they took to quarrelling among themselves; and finally Richard made a truce with the enemy, and went home. On his way he was shipwrecked, and, falling into the hands of his former ally, the Duke of Austria, was long held a prisoner in Germany, till a ransom should be paid for him.

Meanwhile England was in a state of great disorder, Prince John, the King's brother, trying to get as much power into his own hands as he could, and hoping to become king himself some day. All the great nobles did the same thing on a smaller scale, and each acted as if he was a little king, fighting with his neighbours, if he had a mind, and oppressing the poor peasants, if it suited him to do so.

Then outlawry became frequent: that is, bands of men would take to the forests as outlaws or brigands, and live partly by plundering travellers on the roads, partly by shooting deer and other game. They were, in fact, a combination of highwaymen and poachers. One of these, Robin Hood, became very celebrated for his daring and occasional generosity, and he has been brought into the tale by Scott, though it is doubtful how far he was a real person, and, if he was, whether he lived at this time. For outlawry, like the private feuds and rebellions (sometimes great enough to be called civil wars) was fairly common all through what are called the Middle Ages, that is till

about the end of the fifteenth century.

When we read the history of these ages, we notice all this confusion and fighting, and set it down as the first great difference between the Middle Ages and later times. We are inclined to ask, 'what was the reason for it?' and 'how came the country to get along at all under it?' To answer these questions we must look at some other differences.

Nowadays, if people have disputes, there are courts of law to decide who is in the right; if there is any disorder, there are the police to put it down; and behind the police there is the army, which could be used if any one tried to raise a rebellion. Behind the army again is the Parliament, which represents the whole people, and which finds the money for the Queen and her government to keep such an army and all the other machinery of the State in working order. Nobody may keep soldiers but the Queen.

Now, in the Middle Ages this was not so. There was no standing army, that is a force always under arms and ready for service. Instead of it there was what is called the Feudal System. That meant that the greater part of the land was held by nobles to whom the kings had granted it on condition that they should serve him in war when summoned; they were called the king's vassals or liegemen, and raised their own soldiers from among their tenants. These troops were only raised when wanted, and the rule was that the vassal was only bound to follow his lord for forty days every year. This was not kept strictly; but it accounts for armies sometimes melting away sud-

denly, and for the difficulty the kings often found in keeping their troops in the field. It helps us, too, to understand why the wars of the Middle Ages often were so long; for instance, the series of wars with France, called the Hundred Years' War lasted from 1337 to 1453. The armies would take the field for a short time each year, then mostly go home, and live comparatively safely in their castles and fortified towns till the next campaign.

The Feudal System also made rebellions easier than they would be now. For, if the vassals could raise troops to serve the king, they could do so to fight against him, though, of course, they were not supposed to do so, and in England the under tenants were even supposed to be bound to refuse to follow their lords against the king. But this was often disregarded. Private feuds in the same way might also lead to battles between different lords, but this does not seem to have been so common in England as abroad. Still it was possible, and in some periods, as when Richard I. was out of the country, the nobles might do almost as they pleased.

We see then that in these days, (1) the army was not a standing army, and (2) each lord, and not the king alone, had his own troops.

We noticed that now Parliament finds the money for all military purposes. In the Middle Ages there was a Parliament; but, like the army, it was only called for when it was wanted—*e.g.* to grant money for special purposes, or (more rarely) to make laws; and so it exercised hardly any control over the everyday working of the government.

In the period referred to in this novel, Richard I.'s time, only half of Parliament, as we know it, was in existence: there was no House of Commons, only an assembly of the great Barons, Bishops, and Abbots, or the House of Lords, as we should say now. And we are before the days of the Great Charter of 1215, when the king, for the first time, undertook not to raise taxes or make laws without Parliament's consent.

Hence we see how it was that fighting was so frequent: if any party had a grievance, they could not get what they wanted by working till they had a majority in Parliament, and then pass an Act about it. Rebellion was one natural way out of the difficulty. War was so much in men's minds that it took a long while for them to think of other ways of settling difficult matters. Even in private disputes, or when any one was accused of a wrong, it appeared quite natural to resort to arms for a settlement. So we find the custom of trial by battle. Either of the two parties to a suit could claim the right of fighting his opponent. And, if one party was a woman, or otherwise unable to fight, she or he could have a champion to do battle instead. You will find a case of that in our story.

When we inquire how the country managed to thrive under this system, we shall probably see it was because it was the only possible one for the time. Life and property were not so safe as they are under a strong modern government, but they were safer than they would have been if there had been no feudal system. For under it, on the whole, the strong protected the weak; that is, each lord would find it best to protect his own dependants,

because he really depended on them to resist his enemies.

There are two other things which you must notice when thinking of this question, (1) the Church, and (2) the Towns. The Church had great influence on the religious side alone, and the Bishops and heads of the great monasteries were also great landowners. Generally their influence was on the side of peace; for one thing it was the influence of the Church which led to the disuse of Trial by Battle, after it had been condemned by Pope Innocent III. in the reign of John.

The walled towns too, being fairly secure behind their fortifications, and generally having charters from the kings giving them leave to manage their own affairs, were, as a rule, peaceful centres of trade. Such charters were beginning to be common in Richard's I.'s time: order was kept in the towns by a sort of police formed of the townsmen themselves, often called Trained Bands; fairs were held, to which country-folk came to buy and sell; and various industries could be safely carried on within the walls.

What put an end to this general state of lawless independence, which came to a head in the Wars of the Roses, was the growth of the royal power at the end of the fifteenth century. It was Henry VII. (1485–1509) who finally put down the practice of the nobles keeping soldiers of their own; and then, under the Stuarts, we have Parliament rising into prominence, with the result that we have now the strong and, at the same time, peaceful system under which we are governed.

To come back to our tale; it is interesting both for the

story itself, which is full of exciting adventures, and for the pictures it gives us of the life of England in the days of the early Plantagenets. We have almost every class of the people represented—the King himself, brave, generous, and hot-tempered; the Norman baron, in Front-de-Bœuf; the Saxon squire, in Cedric; the wealthy Churchman, in Prior Aymer; the Knight Templars, one of the two Orders of soldier-monks, whose special duty it was to fight for the Holy Sepulchre; the Jewish money-lender, the friar, and the outlaw; the swineherd and the jester. Each of these characters you will find quite distinct, and so well drawn that we seem quite to know them all, as if they were personal friends or enemies, as the case may be.

We see also a good deal of how they lived, *e.g.* the tournament, the siege, the trial by battle. The tournament is very well described; it was a sort of sham fight, in which only knights engaged. The story shows us that even the amusements of those days took a warlike turn, as if the people could not have too much in the way of fighting. Knighthood was an institution which specially suited the age. Any one of good birth who distinguished himself in battle might be made a knight, and have the right to carry a pennon with his arms upon it, so that he could be known in battle. At first any knight could make a new knight, but in time this came to be considered a privilege of the king alone. The knight was sworn to be faithful to the Church, to protect women, and generally to do battle for the right at all times. All that he was bound to was summed up in the word *Chivalry* (from the

French *chevalier*, 'a knight').

We see something also of the life of the lower orders: the serfs of Cedric, especially the swineherd and the jester. A serf was not exactly a slave, but he was not a free man. He was bound to serve his lord, and usually had a small plot of land to till instead of wages. He could not be sold, but was considered to be bound to the soil. Serfs could be employed as domestic servants; and we have one in Wamba, the jester, whose duty it was to amuse his master with jokes and clever sayings, just as we now have our comic newspapers.

The Jew Isaac and his daughter play a prominent part in the tale: and we get a glimpse of the hard treatment of that persecuted race. In the Middle Ages, their chief pursuit was money-lending; and this, as well as their religion, made them both hated and despised. They were not supposed to have any rights, and in theory were only allowed to live in the country by the king's favour. Often they occupied special quarters, the Jewries, in the large towns, and were in constant danger of being attacked. An outcry against the Jews was often raised when things seemed to go badly, and they were largely held responsible for the troubles of the country.

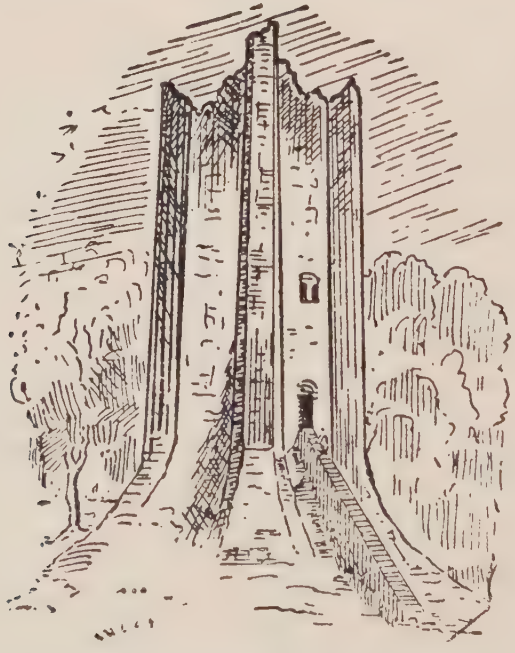
Finally, you will notice the changes in the aspect of the country. The scene is laid mostly in Yorkshire, now the chief seat of the woollen and cutlery manufactures of England. In the twelfth century there were hardly any manufactures, and no mining industry. All over the north, sheep farming was a leading occupation, but the wool was usually shipped to Flanders and made into

stuffs at Ghent or Bruges. The country was dotted here and there with castles, like Coningsburgh, the seat of Athelstane, and Middleham, perhaps intended to be Front-de-Bœuf's castle, and by the great abbeys of Yorkshire, such as Fountains, Jorvaulx, Rievaulx, and the house of the Templars at Templestowe.

Forests covered a much larger part of the country than now; in some cases these were of such extent as almost to cover a whole county. Such was Sherwood Forest, the scene of Robin Hood's exploits, which included all the southern part of Yorkshire, and large parts of Derby and Nottingham as well. Here game roamed, protected by severe game laws, which were, however, set at defiance by outlaws, and herds of swine fed on the beech mast. It is in such a scene that the story of Ivanhoe opens.

Of all the buildings we mentioned just now, the castles, even in the ruinous state in which they mostly are now, tell us most of the life of the Middle Ages, and especially of the warfare, which, as we said, was the leading feature of those times. The site chosen was usually some place of natural strength, a hill or the bend of a river, and sometimes, as in Scotland and the Lake District of England, a little island in a lake. They were often made more secure by being surrounded by a moat, or ditch, filled with water whenever that was possible. To cross the moat drawbridges were used, which could be drawn into the castle in case of a seige. The gates leading in from the bridges were often secured by a portcullis, a sort of screen of iron net-work, which could be let down at any moment from the tower above the gate. Passing under this you

would enter the courtyard, or bailey, surrounded by strong walls, to the top of which flights of steps would lead for the soldiers to man the walls. On the outside a parapet, or battlement, served to protect the warriors while shooting their arrows from the walls. In the courtyard were various buildings, which in early days were mostly of wood, but in time came to be built of stone. In the middle of the court, or at one side, rose the donjon, or keep, a great tower which formed the principal part of the castle, and the last place of resistance in case the enemy stormed the outer walls. To make the keep still stronger, it often had no entrance in the ground floor, and could only be entered by going up a ladder which



CONINGSBURGH CASTLE: YORKSHIRE.

could easily be removed.

This was the rule in those small castles which had no outer court, as was the case in many parts of the country, particularly about the borders of England and Scotland, where these towers are called 'peles,' and form the chief feature of a good many country houses, other rooms having been added in later and more peaceful times to the original pele. Where it was considered safe enough, a permanent staircase was made, but still on the outside leading to the first floor. The lower floors were used as donjons; then came the hall, the chief room of the keep; above that, living rooms; and, on the top of all, what was called the 'fighting deck' or battlemented roof. From storey to storey you went by staircase in the walls, usually at the angles, where they wound round and round in a spiral.

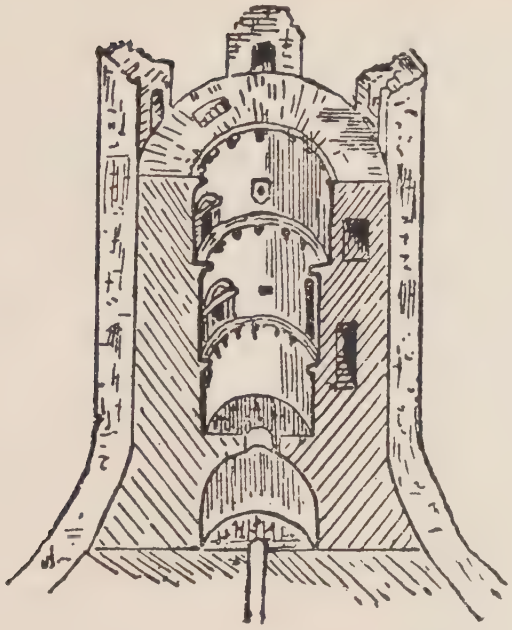
At intervals in the walls were 'loop holes,' that is, long slits through which the archers could shoot and be practically safe at the same time.

In the days of the Norman kings the castles were of this description, and the keeps usually, but not always, square. The best known instance of this kind is the White Tower or Keep of the Tower of London, built by William Rufus. Newcastle-on-Tyne takes its name from a similar castle, built about the same time.

In the accompanying pictures of Coningsburgh Castle you will notice the sloping sides of the ground floor, the very steep staircase outside, and the great height of the tower compared with its ground plan. All these are uncommon. The date at which it was built is uncertain,

but the name Conisburgh or Coningsburgh is Anglo-Saxon for King's Castle, and the tower is thought by some to date from before the Conquest. Whether this was so or not, there must have been a castle on its site belonging to the Saxon kings, and so Scott has chosen it as the home of Athelstane. It is not, perhaps, very likely that descendants of the old line would have been allowed to hold so strong a place, but that, perhaps, does not matter much in a novel.

One peculiarity of Norman keeps which will strike you, is the small size of such windows as there are. The fireplaces are large, and these, with the thickness of the walls, would make the rooms quite warm enough in winter, but they must have been very dark. From this we gather that these castles were not very comfortable places to live in, and so, as time went on, we find changes made with a view to more light. Where the outer defences were very strong, it was found safe to put larger windows in the rooms of the keep: hence we commonly find windows of later date inserted in the old Norman towers, particularly in the upper storeys. For it was found gradually that the real strength of a castle lay in its natural position and the strength of its outer defences, not in the keep. A good instance of this feeling is to be seen in Château Gaillard, or the Merry Castle, built by Richard I., on the banks of the Seine, to defend Normandy and, as it were, mock his neighbour and enemy, the King of France. It is on a hill, overlooking the river, and only open to attack on one side; here there are two distinct lines of fortification, planned with the greatest skill. In such a castle the keep



SECTION OF CONINGSBURGH CASTLE.

might be retained as a last resort, but the living rooms might be built in the courtyard and be much more comfortable. A little later the keep disappeared or rather became a series of rooms, surrounding a little inner court, by which device light could be still better combined with security.

This is the idea on which Edward I. constructed castles, which he built to keep down the Welsh after his conquest of their country about a hundred years after Richard I.

As we saw, in time, when the kings grew too strong for the nobles and the feudal system died away, the use of most of the castles died away too. They were either gradually turned into modern country houses, or went

out of use altogether and fell into ruins. Still, fortifications were, and are, necessary, though not in so many places of old. But a modern fortress is very different from, and not half so picturesque as, a mediæval castle. This is due to the use of artillery. Gunpowder was introduced into Europe about the time of Edward III. (1327–1377), and in the course of time quite altered the art of fortification. The great stone walls, on which a host of archers could make no impression, could be quite easily knocked to pieces by heavy guns. So they have been replaced by earthworks where shot will bury themselves, spend their force, and not do very much damage. Also, a moat filled with water is not of very much use if the enemy is sufficiently strong to level your defences and force a surrender with his shells. So the moat and stone tower have mostly disappeared from modern warfare, and the old castles have become only curiosities and interesting reminders of the past.

We said that it was perhaps not likely that Athelstane, supposing there had been such a person, would have been the Lord of Coningsburgh. This brings us to the question of Scott's historical accuracy.

A good deal of fault has been found with him for introducing things that could not have happened at the time his stories are supposed to take place. This is, as a rule, only in matters of small importance, and often the inaccuracies are only slips. For instance, in the *Talisman*, Phillip II. of France swears by St. Louis, who was his own grandson, and not born at the time! Even in more important things Scott is sometimes not strictly accurate.

Thus it appears that tournaments of the elaborate kind described in our story were not known in England till later than Richard I. And from Cedric's language, no one would think that for more than 120 years England had been under foreign kings. But on the whole, the picture we got of mediæval England is a true one, and in a historical novel we need not look for very minute accuracy of detail so long as the broad outlines of the picture are true to the life.

CHAPTER I

The sun was setting upon one of the rich grassy glades of Sherwood Forest. Hundreds of broad-headed, short-stemmed, wide-branched oaks, which had witnessed perhaps the stately march of the Roman soldiery, flung their gnarled arms over a thick carpet of the most delicious green sward; in some places they were intermingled with beeches, hollies, and copsewood of various descriptions; in others they receded from each other, forming long sweeping vistas.

The human figures which completed this landscape, were in number two, partaking, in their dress and appearance, of that wild and rustic character which belonged to the woodlands of the West Riding of Yorkshire at that early period. The eldest of these men had a stern, savage, and wild aspect. His garment was of the simplest form imaginable, being a close jacket with sleeves, composed of the tanned skin of some animal and reached from the throat to the knees. Sandals, bound with thongs made of boar's hide, protected the feet, and a roll of thin leather was twined artificially around the legs, and ascending above the calf, left the knees bare, like those of a Scottish Highlander. To make the jacket sit yet more close to the body, it was gathered at the middle by a broad leather belt, secured by a brass buckle. In the belt was stuck one of those long, broad, sharp-pointed, and two-edged knives, with a buck's-horn handle, which were fabricated

in the neighbourhood, and bore even at this early period the name of a Sheffield whittle. The man had no covering upon his head, which was only defended by his own thick hair matted and twisted together, and scorched by the influence of the sun into a rusty dark-red colour, forming a contrast with the overgrown beard upon his cheeks, which was rather of a yellow or amber hue. One part of his dress only remains, but it is too remarkable to be suppressed; it was a brass ring, resembling a dog's collar, but without any opening, and soldered fast round his neck, so loose as to form no impediment to his breathing, yet so tight as to be incapable of being removed, excepting by the use of the file. On this singular gorget was engraved, in Saxon characters: 'Garth, the son of Beowulph, is the born thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood.'

Beside the swineherd, for such was Gurth's occupation, was seated a person about ten years younger in appearance, and whose dress though resembling his companion's in form, was of better materials and of a more fantastic appearance. His jacket had been stained of a bright purple hue, upon which there had been some attempt to paint grotesque ornaments in different colours. He had thin silver bracelets upon his arms, and on his neck a collar of the same metal, bearing the inscription, 'Wamba, the son of Witles, is the thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood.' He was provided also with a cap, having around it more than one bell, about the size of those attached to hawks, which jingled as he turned his head to one side or other. He was equipped with a sort of sword of lath, resembling that with which Harlequin

operates his wonders upon the modern stage.

'The curse of St. Withold upon these infernal porkers!' said the swineherd, after blowing his horn obstreperously, to collect together the scattered herd of swine, which, answering his call with notes equally melodious, made, however, no haste to move themselves from the luxurious banquet of beech-mast and acorns on which they had fattened. 'The curse of St. Withold upon them and upon me! Here, Fangs! Fangs!' he ejaculated at the top of his voice to a ragged wolfish-looking dog, which ran limping about as if with the purpose of seconding his master in collecting the refractory grunters. 'A devil draw the teeth of him,' said Gurth, 'and the mother of mischief confound the Ranger of the forest, that cuts the foreclaws off our dogs, and makes them unfit for their trade! Wamba, up and help me.'

'Truly,' said Wamba, without stirring from the spot, 'I have consulted my legs upon this matter, and they are altogether of opinion, that to carry my gay garments through these sloughs would be an act of unfriendship to my sovereign person and royal wardrobe; wherefore, Gurth, I advise thee to call off Fangs, and leave the herd to their destiny, which can be little else than to be converted into Normans before morning to thy no small ease and comfort.'

'The swine turned Normans to my comfort!' quoth Gurth; 'expound that to me, Wamba, for my brain is too dull, and my mind too vexed to read riddles.'

'Why, how call you those grunting brutes running about on their four legs?' demanded Wamba.

'Swine, fool, swine,' said the herd, 'every fool knows that.'

'And swine is good Saxon,' said the Jester; 'but how call you the sow when she is flayed, and drawn, and quartered, and hung up by the heels like a traitor?'

'Pork,' answered the swineherd.

'I am very glad every fool knows that too,' said Wamba, 'and pork, I think, is good Norman-French; and so when the brute lives, and is in the charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name; but becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is carried to the Castle-hall to feast among the nobles: what dost thou think of this, friend Gurth, ha?'

'It is but too true doctrine, friend Wamba, however it got into thy fool's pate.'

'Nay, I can tell you more,' said Wamba, in the same tone; 'there is old Alderman Ox continues to hold his Saxon epithet, while he is under the charge of serfs and bondsmen such as thou, but becomes beef, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him. Mynheer Calf, too, becomes Monsieur de Veau in the like manner; he is Saxon when he requires tendance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes matter of enjoyment; but, soft, whom have we here?'

'Never mind whom,' answered Gurth, who had now got his herd before him.

'Nay, but I must see riders,' answered Wamba; 'perhaps they are come from Fairy-land with a message from King Oberon.'

'A murrain take thee!' rejoined the swineherd; 'wilt thou talk of such things, while a terrible storm of thunder and lightning is raging within a few miles of us? Hark, how the thunder rumbles! let us home ere the storm begins to rage, for the night will be fearful.'

Wamba seemed to feel the force of this appeal, and accompanied his companion down the forest glade; but the noise of the horsemen's feet continuing to approach, he could not be prevented from lingering occasionally on the road, upon every pretence which occurred. The horsemen, therefore, soon overtook them.

Their numbers amounted to ten men, of whom the two who rode foremost seemed to be persons of considerable importance, and the others their attendants. It was not difficult to ascertain the condition and character of one of these personages. He was obviously an ecclesiastic of high rank; his dress was that of a Cistercian monk, but composed of materials much finer than those which the rule of that order admitted. His mantle and hood were of the best Flanders cloth, and fell in ample, and not ungraceful folds, around a handsome, though somewhat corpulent person.

This worthy churchman rode upon a well-fed ambling mule, whose furniture was highly decorated, and whose bridle, according to the fashion of the day, was ornamented with silver bells.

The companion of the church dignitary was a man past forty, thin, strong, tall and muscular; an athletic figure, which had sustained a thousand toils, and was ready to dare a thousand more. His head was covered

with a scarlet cap, faced with fur—of that kind which the French call *mortier* from its resemblance to the shape of an inverted mortar.

His upper dress resembled that of his companion in shape, being a long monastic mantle; but the colour, being scarlet, showed that he did not belong to any of the four regular orders of monks. On the right shoulder of the mantle there was cut, in white cloth, a cross of peculiar form. This upper robe concealed a shirt of linked mail, with sleeves and gloves of the same, curiously plaited and interwoven; and mail-hose, reaching from the ankle to the knee, effectually protected the legs, and completed the rider's defensive armour. In his girdle he wore a long and double-edged dagger, which was the only offensive weapon about his person.

He rode, not a mule, like his companion, but a strong hackney for the road, to save his gallant war-horse, which a squire led behind, fully accoutred for battle, with a chamfron or plaited head-piece upon his head, having a short spike projecting from the front. A second squire held aloft his master's lance, and carried his small triangular shield.

These two squires were followed by two attendants, whose dark visages, white turbans, and the Oriental form of their garments, showed them to be natives of some distant Eastern country.

The appearance of this cavalcade not only attracted the curiosity of Wamba, but excited even that of his less volatile companion. The monk he instantly knew to be the Prior of Jorvaulx Abbey, well known for many miles

around as a lover of the chase and the banquet.

Prior Aymer and his character were well known to our Saxon serfs, who made their rude obeisance and received his '*benedicite, mez filz*,' in return.

But the singular appearance of his companion and his attendants arrested their attention and excited their wonder, and they could scarely attend to the Prior of Jorvaulx' question when he demanded if they knew of any place of harbourage in the vicinity; so much were they surprised at the half-monastic, half-military appearance of the swarthy stranger, and at the uncouth dress and arms of his Eastern attendants.

'I asked you, my children,' said the Prior, raising his voice, and using the lingua Franca, or mixed language, in which the Norman and Saxon races conversed with each other, 'if there be in this neighbourhood any good man, who, for the love of God and devotion to Mother Church, will give two of her humblest servants, with their train, a night's hospitality and refreshment?'

'Two of the humblest servants of Mother Church!' repeated Wamba to himself; 'I should like to see her seneschals, her chief butlers, and her other principal domestics!'

After this internal commentary on the Prior's speech, he raised his eyes, and replied to the question which had been put.

'If the reverend fathers,' he said, 'loved good cheer and soft lodging, a few miles of riding would carry them to the Priory of Brinxworth; or, if they preferred spending a penitential evening, they might turn down yonder

wild glade, which would bring them to the hermitage of Copmanhurst, where a pious anchoret would make them sharers for the night of the shelter of his roof and the benefit of his prayers.'

The Prior shook his head at both proposals.

'Mine honest friend,' said he, 'we churchmen do not exhaust each other's hospitality, but rather require that of the laity, giving them thus an opportunity to serve God in honouring and relieving his appointed servants.'

'It is true,' replied Wamba, 'that I did conceive that the charity of Mother Church and her servants might be said, with other charity, to begin at home.'

'A truce to thine insolence, fellow,' said the armed rider, breaking in on his prattle with a high and stern voice, 'and tell us, if thou canst, the road to—— How call'd you your franklin, Prior Aymer?'

'Cedric,' answered the Prior; 'Cedric the Saxon.—Tell me, good fellow, are we near his dwelling, and can you show us the road?'

'The road will be uneasy to find,' answered Gurth, who broke silence for the first time, 'and the family of Cedric retire early to rest.'

'Tush, tell not me, fellow,' said the military rider; ''tis easy for them to arise and supply the wants of travellers such as we are, who will not stoop to beg the hospitality which we have a right to command.'

'I know not,' said Gurth sullenly, 'if I should show the way to my master's house, to those who demand as a right the shelter which most are fain to ask as a favour.'

'Your reverences must hold on this path until you come to a sunken cross.'

'Second to NONE', said the Pilgrim, who had stood near enough to hear.

'Do you dispute with me, slave?' said the soldier, raising the riding-rod which he held in his hand, with the purpose of chastising what he considered as the insolence of the peasant.

'Nay, by St. Mary, brother Brian, you must not think you are now in Palestine, predominating over heathen Turks and infidel Saracens,' said the Prior.—'Tell me, good fellow,' said he to Wamba, and seconded his speech by a small piece of silver coin, 'the way to Cedric the Saxon's; you cannot be ignorant of it, and it is your duty to direct the wanderer even when his character is less sanctified than ours.'

'Well, then,' answered Wamba, 'your reverences must hold on this path till you come to a sunken cross, of which scarce a cubit's length remains above ground; then take the path to the left, and I trust your reverences will obtain shelter before the storm comes on.'

The Abbot thanked his sage adviser; and the cavalcade, setting spurs to their horses, rode on as men do who wish to reach their inn before the bursting of a night-storm. As their horses' hoofs died away, Gurth said to his companion. 'If they follow thy wise direction, the reverend fathers will hardly reach Rotherwood this night.'

'No,' said the Jester, grinning, 'but they may reach Sheffield if they have good luck, and that is as fit a place for them. I am not so bad a woodsman as to show the dog where the deer lies, if I have no mind he should chase him.'

'What mean these fellows by their capricious inso-

lence?' said the Templar to the Prior, 'and why did you prevent me from chastising it?'

'Marry, brother Brian,' replied the Prior, 'besides that beating this fellow could procure us no information respecting the road to Cedric's house, it would have been sure to have established a quarrel betwixt you and him had we found our way thither. Remember what I told you; this wealthy franklin is proud, fierce, jealous, and irritable; a withstander of the nobility and even of his neighbours, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf and Philip Malvoisin, who are not babes to strive with.'

'Prior Aymer,' said the Templar, 'I shall expect much beauty in this celebrated Rowena, to counter-balance the self-denial and forbearance which I must exert, if I am to court the favour of such a seditious churl as you have described her father Cedric.'

'Cedric is not her father,' replied the Prior, 'and is but of remote relation; she is descended from higher blood than even he pretends to, and is but distantly connected with him by birth. Her guardian, however, he is, self-constituted as I believe; but his ward is as dear to him as if she were his own child. Of her beauty you shall soon be judge.'

'Should your boasted beauty,' said the Templar, 'be weighed in the balance and found wanting, you know our wager.'

'My gold collar,' answered the Prior, 'against ten buts of Chian wine; they are mine as securely as if they were already in the convent vaults.'

'And I am myself to be the judge,' said the Templar,

'and am only to be convicted on my own admission, that I have seen no maiden so beautiful since Pentecost was a twelvemonth. Ran it not so?—Prior, your collar is in danger: I will wear it over my gorget in the lists of Ashby-de-la-Zouche.'

'Win it fairly,' said the Prior, 'and wear it as ye will; but here is the clown's sunken cross, and the night is so dark that we can hardly see which of the roads we are to follow. He bid us turn, I think, to the left.'

'To the right,' said Brian, 'to the best of my remembrance.'

'To the left, certainly, the left; I remember his pointing with his wooden sword.'

'Ay, but he held his sword in his left hand, and so pointed across his body with it,' said the Templar; 'but here is some one either asleep, or lying dead at the foot of the cross—Hugo, stir him with the but-end of thy lance.'

This was no sooner done than the figure arose, exclaiming in good French, 'Whosoever thou art, it is discourteous in you to disturb my thoughts.'

'We did but wish to ask you,' said the Prior, 'the road to Rotherwood, the abode of Cedric the Saxon.'

'I myself am bound thither,' replied the stranger; 'and if I had a horse, I would be your guide.'

'Thou shalt have both thanks and reward, my friend,' said the Prior, 'if thou wilt bring us to Cedric's in safety.'

And he caused one of his attendants to mount his own led horse, and give that upon which he had hitherto ridden to the stranger.

Their conductor pursued an opposite road from that which Wamba had recommended for the purpose of misleading them. The path soon led deeper into the woodland, and crossed more than one brook, the approach to which was rendered perilous by the marshes through which it flowed; but the stranger seemed to know, as if by instinct, the soundest ground and the safest points of passage; and by dint of caution and attention brought the party safely into a wilder avenue than any they had yet seen; and, pointing to a large low irregular building at the upper extremity, he said to the Prior, 'Yonder is Rotherwood, the dwelling of Cedric the Saxon.'

This was a joyful intimation to Aymer, whose nerves were none of the strongest, and who had suffered such agitation and alarm in the course of passing through the dangerous bogs, that he had not yet had the curiosity to ask his guide a single question. Finding himself now at his ease and near shelter, his curiosity began to awake, and he demanded of the guide who and what he was.

'A Palmer, just returned from the Holy Land,' was the answer.

'You had better have tarried there to fight for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre,' said the Templar.

'True, Reverend Sir Knight,' answered the Palmer, to whom the appearance of the Templar seemed perfectly familiar, 'but when those who were under oath to recover the holy city, are found travelling at such a distance from the scene of their duties, can you wonder that a peaceful peasant like me should decline the task?'

The Templar would have made an angry reply, but was interrupted by the Prior, who again expressed his astonishment that their guide, after such long absence, should be so perfectly acquainted with the passes of the forest.

'I was born a native of these parts,' answered their guide, and as he made the reply they stood before the mansion of Cedric—a low irregular building containing several court-yards or enclosures, extending over a considerable space of ground.

Before the entrance the Templar wound his horn loudly; for the rain, which had long threatened, began now to descend with great violence.

CHAPTER II

In a hall, the height of which was greatly disproportioned to its extreme length and width, a long oaken table, formed of planks rough-hewn from the forest, and which had scarcely received any polish, stood ready prepared for the evening meal of Cedric the Saxon. For about one quarter of the length of the apartment, the floor was raised by a step, and this space, which was called the dais, was occupied only by the principal members of the family and visitors of distinction. For this purpose, a table richly covered with scarlet cloth was placed transversely across the platform, from the middle of which ran the longer and lower board, at which the domestics and inferior persons fed, down towards the bottom of the hall.

In the centre of the upper table, were placed two chairs, more elevated than the rest, for the master and mistress of the family, who presided over the scene of hospitality, and from doing so derived their Saxon title of honour, which signifies 'the Dividers of Bread'. One of these seats was at present occupied by Cedric the Saxon.

It appeared from the countenance of this proprietor, that he was of a frank, but hasty and choleric temper. One grisly old wolf-dog, with the liberty of an indulged favourite, had planted himself close by the chair of state, and occasionally ventured to solicit notice by putting his large hairy head upon his master's knee, or pushing his nose into his hand; but he was repelled by the stern

command, 'Down, Balder, down! I am not in the humour for foolery.'

In fact, Cedric was in no very placid state of mind. The Lady Rowena, who had been absent to attend an evening mass at a distant church, had but just returned, and was changing her garments, which had been wetted by the storm. There were as yet no tidings of Gurth and his charge, which should long since have been driven home from the forest. Add to this, Cedric had fasted since noon, and his usual supper hour was long past. His displeasure was expressed in broken sentences, partly muttered to himself, partly addressed to the domestics who stood around;—'Why tarries the Lady Rowena?'

'She is but changing her head-gear,' replied a female attendant, with as much confidence as the favourite lady's-maid usually answers the master of a modern family; 'you would not wish her to sit down to the banquet in her hood and kirtle; and no lady within the shire can be quicker in arraying herself than my mistress.'

This undeniable argument produced a sort of acquiescent 'umph'! on the part of the Saxon, with the addition, 'I wish her devotion may choose fair weather for the next visit to St. John's Kirk;— but what keeps Gurth so long afield? I suppose we shall have an evil account of the herd.'

Oswald the cupbearer modestly suggested, that it was scarce an hour since the tolling of the curfew.

'The foul fiend,' exclaimed Cedric, 'take the curfew-bell, and the tyrannical bastard by whom it was devised,

and the heartless slave who names it with a Saxon tongue to a Saxon ear! The curfew!' he added, pausing, 'ay, the curfew; which compels true men to extinguish their lights, that thieves and robbers may work their deeds in darkness!—Ay, the curfew!'

He was suddenly interrupted by the blast of a horn, which was replied to by the clamorous yells and barking of all the dogs in the hall.

'To the gates, knaves!' said the Saxon hastily. 'See what tidings that horn tells us of.'

Returning in less than three minutes, a warder announced, that the Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx, and a good knight Brian de Boise-Guilbert, commander of the valiant and venerable order of Knights Templars, with a small retinue, requested hospitality and lodging for the night, being on their way to a tournament which was to be held not far from Ashby-de-la-Zouche, on the second day from the present.

'Aymer, the Prior Aymer! Brian de Bois-Guilbert!'—muttered Cedric; 'Normans both;—but Norman or Saxon, the hospitality of Rotherwood must not be impeached; they are welcome, since they have chosen to halt —more welcome would they have been to have ridden farther on their way—Go, Hundebert,' he added, to a sort of major-domo who stood behind him with a white wand; 'take six of the attendants, and introduce the strangers to the guests' lodging. Look after their horses and mules, and see their train lack nothing. Say to them, Hundebert, that Cedric would himself bid them welcome, but he is under a vow never to step more than three steps

from the dais of his own hall to meet any who shares not the blood of Saxon royalty. Elgitha, let thy Lady Rowena know we shall not this night expect her in the hall unless such be her especial pleasure.'

'But it will be her especial pleasure,' answered Elgitha, with great readiness, 'for she is ever desirous to hear the latest news from Palestine.'

Cedric darted at the forward damsel a glance of hasty resentment; but Rowena, and whatever belonged to her, were privileged and secure from his anger. He only replied, 'Silence, maiden; thy tongue outruns thy discretion. Say my message to thy mistress, and let her do her pleasure. Here, at least, the descendant of Alfred still reigns a princess.' Elgitha left the apartment.

'Palestine!' repeated the Saxon; 'Palestine! how many ears are turned to the tales which dissolute crusaders or hypocritical pilgrims bring from that fatal land! I too might ask—I too might enquire—I too might listen with a beating heart to fables which the wily strollers devise to cheat us into hospitality—but no—The son who has disobeyed me is no longer mine; nor will I concern myself more for his fate.'

He knit his brows, and fixed his eyes for an instant on the ground; as he raised them, the folding-doors at the bottom of the hall were cast wide, and, preceded by the major-domo with his wand and four domestics bearing blazing torches, the guests entered.

Cedric rose to receive his guests with an air of dignified hospitality, and, descending from the dias, made three steps towards them, and then awaited their approach.

'I grieve,' he said, 'reverend Prior, that my vow binds me to advance no farther upon this floor of my fathers, even to receive such guests as you and this valiant Knight of the Holy Temple. But my steward has expounded to you the cause of my seeming discourtesy. But your homely fare is before you; feed, and let welcome make amends for hard fare.'

When the repast was about to commence, the major-domo, or steward, suddenly raising his wand, said aloud,—'Forbear!—Place for the Lady Rowena.' A side-door at the upper end of the hall now opened behind the banquet table, and Rowena, followed by four female attendants, entered the apartment. Cedric, though surprised, hastened to meet her, and to conduct her, with respectful ceremony, to the elevated seat at his own right hand, appropriated to the lady of the mansion. All stood up to receive her; and, replying to their courtesy by a mute gesture of salutation, she moved gracefully forward to assume her place at the board. Ere she had time to do so, the Templar whispered to the Prior, 'I shall wear no collar of gold of yours at the tournament. The Chian wine is your own.'

'Said I not so?' answered the Prior; 'but check your raptures, the Franklin observes you.'

Unheeding this remonstrance, Brian de Bois-Guilbert kept his eyes rivetted on the Saxon beauty, more striking, perhaps to his imagination, because differing widely from those of the Eastern sultanas.

When Rowena perceived the Knight Templar's eyes bent on her, she drew with dignity the veil around her

face, as an intimation that the determined freedom of his glance was disagreeable. Cedric saw the motion and its cause. 'Sir Templar,' said he, 'the cheeks of our Saxon maidens have seen too little of the sun to enable them to bear the fixed glance of a crusader.'

'If I have offended,' replied Sir Brian, 'I crave your pardon,—that is, I crave the Lady Rowena's pardon,—for my humility will carry me no lower.'

'The Lady Rowena,' said the Prior, 'has punished us all in chastising the boldness of my friend. Let me hope she will be less cruel to the splendid train which are to meet at the tournament.'

'Our going thither,' said Cedric 'is uncertain. I love not these vanities, which were unknown to my fathers when England was free.'

'Let us hope, nevertheless,' said the Prior, 'our company may determine you to travel thitherward; when the roads are so unsafe, the escort of Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert is not to be despised.'

'Sir Prior,' answered the Saxon, 'wheresoever I have travelled in this land, I have hitherto found myself, with the assistance of my good sword and faithful followers, in no respect needful of other aid. At present, if we indeed journey to Ashby-de-la-Zouche, we do so with my noble neighbour and countryman Athelstane of Coningsburgh, and with such a train as would set outlaws and feudal enemies at defiance.——I drink to you, Sir Prior, in this cup of wine, which I trust your taste will approve, and I thank you for your courtesy.'

'And I,' said the Templar, filling his goblet, 'drink

wassail to the fair Rowena; for never has any been more worthy of such tribute.'

'I will spare your courtesy, Sir Knight,' said Rowena with dignity, and without unveiling herself; 'or rather I will tax it so far as to require of you the latest news from Palestine, a theme more agreeable to our English ears than the compliments which your French breeding teaches.'

'I have little of importance to say, lady,' answered Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, 'excepting the confirmed tidings of a truce with Saladin.'

He was interrupted by Wamba, who had taken his appropriated seat upon a chair.

'These truces with the infidels,' he exclaimed, without caring how suddenly he interrupted the stately Templar, 'make an old man of me.'

'Go to, knave, how so?' said Cedric, his features prepared to receive favourably the expected jest.

'Because,' answered Wamba, 'I remember three of them in my day, each of which was to endure for the course of fifty years; so that, by computation, I must be at least a hundred and fifty years old.'

'I will warrant you against dying of old age, however,' said the Templar, who now recognised his friend of the forest; 'I will assure you from all deaths but a violent one, if you give such directions to wayfarers as you did this night to the Prior and me.'

'How sirrah!' said Cedric, 'misdirect travellers? We must have you whipt; you are at least as much rogue as fool.'

'I pray thee, uncle,' answered the Jester, 'let my folly, for once, protect my roguery. I did but make a mistake between my right hand and my left; and he might have pardoned a greater, who took a fool for his counsellor and guide.'

Conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of the porter's page, who announced that there was a stranger at the gate, imploring admittance and hospitality.

The steward left the banqueting hall, and returning, whispered in the ear of his master, 'It is a Jew, who calls himself Isaac of York; is it fit I should marshall him into the hall?'

'Let Gurth do thine office, Oswald,' said Wamba with his usual effrontery; 'the swineherd will be a fit usher to the Jew.'

'St. Mary!' said the Abbot, crossing himself, 'an unbelieving Jew, and admitted into this presence!'

'A dog Jew,' echoed the Templar, 'to approach a defender of the Holy Sepulchre?'

'By my faith,' said Wamba, 'it would seem the Templars love the Jews' inheritance better than they do their company.'

'Peace, my worthy guests,' said Cedric; 'my hospitality must not be bounded by your dislikes. But I constrain no man to converse or to feed with him. Let him have a board and a morsel apart.'

Introduced with little ceremony, and advancing with fear and hesitation and many a bow of deep humility, a tall thin old man approached the lower end of the board.

The Jew's dress, which appeared to have suffered considerably from the storm, was a plain russet cloak of many folds, covering a dark purple tunic. He had large boots lined with fur, and a belt around his waist, which sustained a small knife, together with a case for writing materials, but no weapon. He wore a high, square, yellow cap of a peculiar fashion, assigned to his nation to distinguish them from Christians, and which he doffed with great humility at the door of the hall.

The reception of this person in the hall of Cedric the Saxon, was such as might have satisfied the most prejudiced enemy of the tribes of Israel. Cedric himself coldly nodded in answer to the Jew's repeated salutation, and signed to him to take place at the lower end of the table.

'Pledge me in a cup of wine, Sir Templar,' he then said, 'and fill another to the Abbot—Cup-bearer! knave, fill the goblets—To the strong in arms, Sir Templar, be their race or language what it will, who now bear them best in Palestine among the champions of the Cross!'

'It becomes not one wearing this badge to answer,' said Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert; 'yet to whom, besides the sworn Champions of the Holy Sepulchre, can the palm be assigned among the champions of the Cross?'

'To the Knights Hospitallers,' said the Abbot.

'I impeach not their fame,' said the Templar; 'nevertheless——'

'I think, friend Cedric,' said Wamba, interfering, 'that had Richard of the Lion's Heart been wise enough to have taken a fool's advice, he might have staid at home

with his merry Englishmen, and left the recovery of Jerusalem to those same Knights who had most to do with the loss of it.'

'Were there, then, none in the English army,' said the Lady Rowena, 'whose names are worthy to be mentioned with the Knights of the Temple and of St. John?'

'Forgive me, lady,' replied De Boise-Guilbert, 'the English monarch did, indeed, bring to Palestine a host of gallant warriors, second only to those whose breasts have been the unceasing bulwark of that blessed land.'

'Second to NONE,' said the Pilgrim, who had stood near enough to hear, and had listened to this conversation with marked impatience. All turned toward the spot whence this unexpected asseveration was heard. 'I say,' repeated the Pilgrim in a firm and stronge voice, 'that the English chivalry were second to NONE. I say besides, for I saw it, that King Richard himself, and five of his knights, held a tournament after the taking of St. John-de-Acre, as challengers against all comers. I say that, on that day, each knight ran three courses, and cast to the ground three antagonists. I add, that seven of these assailants were Knights of the Temple—and Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert well knows the truth of what I tell you.'

It is impossible for language to describe the bitter scowl of rage which rendered yet darker the swarthy countenance of the Templar. But Cedric, whose feelings were seldom occupied by more than one object at once, omitted, in the joyous glee with which he heard of the glory of his countryman, to remark the angry confusion

of his guest; 'I would give thee this golden bracelet, Pilgrim,' he said, 'couldst thou tell me the names of those knights.'

'That will I do blithely,' replied the Pilgrim, 'and without guerdon; my oath, for a time, prohibits me from touching gold.'

'I will wear the bracelet for you, if you will, friend Palmer,' said Wamba.

'The first in honour as in arms, in renown as in place,' said the Pilgrim, 'was the brave Richard,'

'I forgive him,' said Cedric; 'I forgive him his descent from the tyrant Duke William.'

'The Earl of Leicester was the second,' continued the Pilgrim; 'Sir Thomas Multon of Gilsland was the third.'

'Of Saxon descent, he at least,' said Cedric, with exultation.

'Sir Foulk Doilly the fourth,' proceeded the Pilgrim.

'Saxon, also, at least by the mother's side,' continued Cedric, who forgot, in part at least, his hatred to the Normans, in the common triumph of the King of England and his islanders. 'And who was the fifth?' he demanded.

'The fifth was Sir Edwin Turneham.'

'Genuine Saxon, by the soul of Hengist!' shouted Cedric—'And the sixth?' he continued.

'The sixth,' said the Palmer, 'was a young knight of lesser renown and lower rank, assumed into that honourable company less to aid their enterprise than to make up their number—his name dwells not in my memory.'

'Sir Palmer,' said Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert scornfully, 'this assumed forgetfulness comes too late. I will myself

tell the name of the knight before whose lance fortune and my horse's fault occasioned my falling—it was the Knight of Ivanhoe; nor was there one of the six that, for his years, had more renown in arms.—Yet this will I say, and loudly—that were he in England, and durst repeat, in this week's tournament, the challenge of St. John-de-Acre, I, mounted and armed as I am now, would give him every advantage of weapons, and abide the result.'

'Your challenge would soon be answered,' replied the Palmer, 'were your antagonist near you. If Ivanhoe ever returns from Palestine, I will be his surety that he meets you.'

'A goodly security! said the Knight Templar; 'and what do you proffer as a pledge?'

'This reliquary,' said the Palmer, taking a small ivory box from his bosom, and crossing himself; 'containing a portion of the true cross.'

The Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx crossed himself and repeated a pater noster, in which all devoutly joined, excepting the Jew, the Mahomedans, and the Templar; the latter took from his neck a gold chain, which he flung on the boards saying—'Let Prior Aymer hold my pledge and that of this nameless vagrant, in token that when the Knight of Ivanhoe comes within the four seas of Britain, he underlies the challenge of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, which, if he answer not, I will proclaim him as a coward in every Temple Court in Europe.'

'I will not need,' said the Lady Rowena, breaking silence; 'My voice shall be heard, if no other in this hall is raised in behalf of the absent Ivanhoe. I affirm he will

meet fairly every honourable challenge.'

A crowd of conflicting emotions seemed to have occupied Cedric, and kept him silent during this discussion. Gratified pride, resentment, embarrassment, chased each other over his broad and open brow; while his attendants, on whom the name of the sixth knight seemed to produce an effect almost electrical, hung in suspense upon their master's looks. But when Rowena spoke, the sound of her voice seemed to startle him from his silence.

'Lady,' said Cedric, 'this beseems not; were further pledge necessary, I myself, offended and justly offended, as I am, would yet gage my honour for the honour of Ivanhoe. But the wager of battle is complete, even according to the fantastic fashions of Norman chivalry.'

The grace-cup was then served round, and the guests, after making deep obeisance to their landlord and the Lady Rowena, arose and mingled in the hall, while the heads of the family, by separate doors, retired with their attendants.

CHAPTER III

The Palmer, lighted by a domestic with a torch, passed through the intricate combinations of apartments of this large and irregular mansion where a number of small apartments, or rather cells, served for sleeping places to the lower order of domestics, and to strangers of mean degree.

'In which of these sleeps the Jew?' he asked.

'The unbelieving dog,' answered Anwold, 'kennels in the cell next to your holiness.'

'And where sleeps Gurth the swineherd?' said the stranger.

'Gurth,' replied the bondsman, 'sleeps in the cell on your right, as the Jew is that to your left; you serve to keep the child of circumcision separate from the abomination of his tribe.'

'It is well,' said the Palmer: 'the company, even of a Jew, can hardly spread contamination through an oaken partition.'

So saying, he entered the cabin allotted to him, and taking the torch from the domestics' hand, thanked him, and wished him good-night. Having shut the door of his cell, he extinguished his torch, and slept, or at least retained his recumbent posture, till the earliest sunbeams found their way through the little grated window. He then started up, and after repeating his matins and adjusting his dress, he left it, and entered that of Isaac

the Jew, lifting the latch as gently as he could.

The inmate was lying in troubled slumber upon a couch similar to that on which the Palmer himself had passed the night. There was a trouble on his brow amounting almost to agony. His hands and arms moved convulsively, as if struggling with the nightmare; and besides several ejaculations in Hebrew, the following were distinctly heard in the Norman-English, or mixed language of the country; 'For the sake of the God Abraham, spare an unhappy old man! I am poor, I am penniless—should your irons wrench my limbs asunder, I could not gratify you!'

The Palmer waited not the end of the Jew's vision, but stirred him with his pilgrim's staff. The touch probably associated, as is usual, with some of the apprehensions excited by his dream; for the old man started up, his grey hair standing almost erect upon his head, and huddling some part of his garments about him, fixed upon the Palmer his keen black eyes, expressive of wild surprise and of bodily apprehension.

'Fear nothing from me, Isaac,' said the Palmer, 'I come as your friend.'

'The God of Israel requite you,' said the Jew, greatly relieved; 'I dreamed—But Father Abraham be praised, it was but a dream.' Then, collecting himself, he added in his usual tone, 'And what may it be your pleasure to want at so early an hour with the poor Jew?'

'It is to tell you,' said the Palmer, 'that if you leave not this mansion instantly, and travel not with some haste, your journey may prove a dangerous one.'

'Holy Father!' said the Jew, 'whom could it interest to endanger so poor a wretch as I am?'

'The purpose you can best guess,' said the Pilgrim; 'but when the Templar crossed the hall yesternight, he spoke to his slaves in the Saracen language, which I well understand, and charged them this morning to watch the journey of the Jew, and to seize upon him when at a convenient distance from the mansion.'

It is impossible to describe the extremity of terror which seized upon the Jew at this information.

'Holy God of Abraham!' was his first exclamation, folding and elevating his wrinkled hands, but without raising his grey head from the pavement; 'Oh, holy Moses! Oh, blessed Aaron! the dream is not dreamed for naught, and the vision cometh not in vain! I feel their irons already tear my sinews! I feel the rack pass over my body like the saws, and harrows, and axes of iron over the men of Rabbah!'

'Stand up, Isaac, and hearken to me,' said the Palmer, who viewed the extremity of his distress with a compassion in which contempt was largely mingled; 'stand up, I say, and I will point out to you the means of escape. Leave this mansion instantly, while its inmates sleep sound after the last night's revel. I will guide you by the secret paths of the forest known as well to me as to any forester that ranges it, and I will not leave you till you are under safe conduct.'

As the ears of Isaac received the hopes of escape which his speech intimated, he began gradually to raise himself up from the ground, until he fairly rested upon his knees,

throwing back his long grey hair and beard, and fixing his keen black eyes upon the Palmer's face, with a look expressive at once of hope and fear, not unmingled with suspicion. Then, as if suspicion had overpowered his other feelings, he suddenly exclaimed, 'For the love of God, young man, betray me not—do me no treason! I have not means to secure the goodwill of a Christian beggar, were he rating it at a single penny.' As he spoke these last words, he raised himself, and grasped the Palmer's mantle with a look of the most earnest entreaty. The Pilgrim extricated himself, as if there were contamination in the touch.

'Wert thou loaded with all the wealth of thy tribe,' he said, 'what interest have I to injure thee?—In this dress I am vowed to poverty, nor do I change it for ought save a horse and a coat of mail. Yet think not that I care for thy company, or propose myself advantage by it; remain here if thou wilt—Cedric the Saxon may protect thee.'

'Alas!' said the Jew, 'he will not let me travel in his train—Saxon or Norman will be equally ashamed of the poor Israelite; and to travel by myself through the domains of Philip de Malvoisin and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf—Good youth I will go with you!—Let us haste—let us girt up our loins—let us flee!—Here is thy staff, why wilt thou tarry?'

'I tarry not,' said the Pilgrim, giving way to the urgency of his companion; 'but I must secure the means of leaving this place—follow me.'

He led the way to the cell occupied by Gurth the swineherd.—'Arise, Gurth,' said the Pilgrim, 'arise

quickly. Undo the postern gate, and let out the Jew and me.'

Gurth was offended at the familiar and commanding tone assumed by the Palmer. 'The Jew leaving Rotherwood,' said he, raising himself on his elbow, 'and travelling in company with the Palmer to boot——'

'I should as soon have dreamt,' said Wamba, who entered the apartment at the instant, 'of his stealing away with a gammon of bacon.'

'Nevertheless,' said Gurth, again laying down his head on the wooden log which served him for a pillow, 'both Jew and Gentile must be content to abide the opening of the great gate.'

'Nevertheless,' said the Pilgrim in a commanding tone, 'you will not, I think, refuse me that favour.'

So saying, he stooped over the bed of the recumbant swineherd, and whispered something in his ear in Saxon. Gurth started up as if electrified. The Pilgrim, raising his finger in an attitude as if to express caution, added, 'Gurth beware—thou art wont to be prudent. I say, undo the postern—thou shalt know more anon.'

With hasty alacrity Gurth obeyed him, while Wamba and the Jew followed, both wondering at the sudden change in the swineherd's demeanour.

'My mule, my mule,' said the Pilgrim; 'and, hearest thou—let me have another, that I may bear him company till he is beyond these parts—I will return it safely to some of Cedric's train at Ashby.'

Gurth instantly departed to execute the commission.

'I wish I knew,' said Wamba, when his comrade's

back was turned, 'what you Palmers learn in the Holy Land.'

'To say our orisons, fool,' answered the Pilgrim, 'to repent our sins, and to mortify ourselves with fastings, vigils, and long prayers.'

'Something more potent that that,' answered the Jester; 'for when would repentance or prayer make Gurth do a courtesy, or fasting or vigil persuade him to lend you a mule!'

'Go to,' said the Pilgrim, 'thou art but a Saxon fool.'

'Thou sayest well,' said the Jester; 'had I been born a Norman, as I think thou art, I would have had luck on my side, and been next door to a wise man.'

At this moment Gurth appeared on the opposite side of the moat with the mules. The travellers crossed the ditch upon a drawbridge of only two planks breadth, the narrowness of which was matched with the straitness of the postern and with a little wicket in the exterior palisade, which gave access to the forest. No sooner had they reached the mules than the Jew, with hasty and trembling hands, secured behind the saddle a small bag of blue buckram, which he took from under his cloak, containing, as he muttered, 'a change of raiment—only a change of raiment'. Then getting upon the animal with more alacrity and haste than could have been anticipated from his years, he lost no time in so disposing of the skirts of his gaberdine as to conceal completely from observation the burden which he had thus deposited *en croupe*.

The Pilgrim mounted with more deliberation, reaching, as he departed, his hand to Gurth, who kissed it

with the utmost possible veneration. The swineherd stood gazing after the travellers until he was disturbed from his reverie by the voice of Wamba.

'Knowest thou,' said the Jester, 'my good friend Gurth, that thou art strangely courteous and most unwontedly pious on this summer morning? I would I were a black Prior or a barefoot Palmer, to avail myself of thy unwonted zeal and courtesy—certes, I would make more out of it than a kiss of the hand.'

'Thou art no fool thus far, Wamba,' answered Gurth, 'though thou arguest from appearances, and the wisest of us can do no more—But it is time to look after my charge.'

When the travellers had pushed on at a rapid rate through many devious paths, the Palmer at length broke silence.

'That large decayed oak,' he said, 'marks the boundaries over which Front-de-Bœuf claims authority—we are long since far from those of Malvoisin. There is now no fear of pursuit.'

'May the wheels of their chariots be taken off,' said the Jew, 'like those of the host of Pharaoh, that they may drive heavily!—But leave me not, good Pilgrim—think but of that fierce and savage Templar?'

'Our road,' said the Palmer, 'should here separate; for it beseems not men of my character and thine to travel together longer than needs must be. Besides, what succour couldst thou have from me, a peaceful Pilgrim, against two armed heathens?'

'O good youth', answered the Jew, 'thou canst defend

me, and I know thou wouldst. Poor as I am, I will requite it—not with money, for money, so help me my Father Abraham, I have none—but——'

'Money and recompense,' said the Palmer, interrupting him, 'I have already said I require not of thee. Guide thee I can; and it may be, even in some sort defend thee; since to protect a Jew against a Saracen can scare be accounted unworthy of a Christian. Therefore, Jew, I will see thee safe under some fitting escort. We are now not far from the town of Sheffield, where thou mayest easily find many of thy tribe.'

'The blessing of Jacob be upon thee, good youth!' said the Jew; 'in Sheffield I can harbour with my kinsman Zareth.'

'Be it so,' said the Palmer; 'at Sheffield then we part, and half-an-hour's riding will bring us in sight of that town.'

The half hour was spent in perfect silence on both parts; the Pilgrim perhaps disdaining to address the Jew, except in case of absolute necessity, and the Jew not presuming to force a conversation with a person whose journey to the Holy Sepulchre gave a sort of sanctity to his character. They paused on the top of a gently rising bank, and the Pilgrim, pointing to the town of Sheffield, said, 'Here, then, we part.'

'Not till you have had the poor Jew's thanks,' said Isaac; 'for I presume not to ask you to go with me to my kinsman Zareth's, who might aid me with some means of repaying your good offices.'

'I have already said,' answered the Pilgrim, 'that I desire no recompense. If, among the huge list of thy

debtors, thou wilt, for my sake, spare the gyves and the dungeon to some unhappy Christian who stands in thy danger, I shall hold this morning's service to thee well bestowed.'

'Stay, stay,' said the Jew, laying hold of his garment; 'something would I do more than this, something for thyself.—God knows the Jew is poor—yes, Isaac is the beggar of his tribe—but forgive me should I guess what thou most lack at this moment.'

'If thou wert to guess truly,' said the Palmer, 'it is what thou canst not supply, wert thou as wealthy as thou sayest thou art poor.'

'As I say?' echoed the Jew; 'Oh! believe it, I say but the truth; I am a plundered, indebted, distressed man. Yet I can tell thee what thou lackest, and, it may be, supply it too. Thy wish even now for a horse and armour.'

The Palmer started and turned suddenly towards the Jew:—'What fiend prompted that guess?' said he.

'No matter,' said the Jew smiling, and drawing forth his writing materials in haste, he began to write upon a piece of paper. When he had finished, he delivered the scroll, which was in the Hebrew character to the Pilgrim, saying, 'In the town of Leicester all men know the rich Jew, Kirjath Jairam of Lombardy; give him this scroll—he has on sale six Milan harnesses, the worst would suit a crowned head—ten goodly steeds, the worst might mount a king, were he to battle for his throne. Of these he will give thee thy choice, with everything else that can furnish thee forth for the tournament: when it is over, thou wilt return them safely—unless thou shouldst have

wherewith to pay their value. Fare thee well! Yet hark thee, thrust thyself not too forward into this vain hurly-burly—I speak not for endangering the steed and coat of armour, but for the sake of thine own life and limbs.'

'Gramercy for thy caution,' said the Palmer, again smiling; 'I will use thy courtesy frankly, and it will go hard with me, but I will requite it.'

CHAPTER IV

The Passage of Arms, as it was called, which was to take place at Ashby, in the county of Leicester, as champions of the first renown were to take the field in the presence of Prince John himself, who was expected to grace the lists, had attracted universal attention, and an immense confluence of persons of all ranks hastened upon the appointed morning to the place of combat.

The scene was singularly romantic. On the verge of a wood, which approached to within a mile of the town of Ashby, was an extensive meadow, of the finest and most beautiful green turf, surrounded on one side by the forest, and fringed on the other by straggling oak-trees, some of which had grown to an immense size. The ground, as if fashioned on purpose for the martial display which was intended, sloped gradually down on all sides with strong palisades, forming a space of a quarter of a mile in length, and about half as broad. The form of the enclosure was an oblong square, save that the corners were considerably rounded off, in order to afford more convenience to the spectators. The openings for the entry of the combatants were at the northern and southern extremities of the lists, accessible by strong wooden gates, each wide enough to admit two horsemen riding abreast. At each of these portals were stationed two heralds, attended by six trumpets, as many pursuivants, and a strong body of men-at-

arms, for maintaining order and ascertaining the quality of the knights who proposed to engage in this martial game.

On a platform beyond the southern entrance, formed by a natural elevation of the ground, were pitched five magnificent pavilions, adorned with pennons of russet and black, the chosen colours of the five knights challengers. The cords of the tents were of the same colour. Before each pavilion was suspended the shield of the knight by whom it was occupied, and beside it stood his squire, quaintly disguised as a savage or silvan man, or in some other fantastic dress, according to the taste of his master, and the character he was pleased to assume during the game. The central pavilion, as the place of honour, had been assigned to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whose renown in all games of chilvalry, no less than his connection with the knights who had undertaken this Passage of Arms, had occasioned him to be eagerly received into the company of the challengers, though he had so recently joined them. On one side of his tent were pitched those of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf and Philip de Malvoisin, and on the other was the pavilion of Hugh de Grantmesnil, a noble baron in the vicinity, whose ancestor had been Lord High Steward of England in the time of the Conqueror, and his son William Rufus. Ralph de Vipont, a knight of St. John of Jerusalem, who had some ancient possessions at a place called Heather, near Ashby-de-la-Zouche, occupied the fifth pavilion. From the entrance into the lists, a gently sloping passage, ten yards in breadth, led up to the platform on which the tents

were pitched. It was strongly secured by a palisade on each side, as was the esplanade in front of the pavilions, and the whole was guarded by men-at-arms.

The northern access to the lists terminated in a similar entrance of thirty feet in breadth, at the extremity of which was a large enclosed space for such knights as might be disposed to enter the list with the challengers, behind which were placed tents containing refreshments of every kind for their accommodation, with armourers, farriers, and other attendants, in readiness to give their services wherever they might be necessary.

The exterior of the lists was in part occupied by temporary galleries, spread with tapestry and carpets, and accommodated with cushions for the convenience of those ladies and nobles who were expected to attend the tournament. A narrow space, betwixt these galleries and the lists gave accommodation for yeomanry and spectators of a better degree than the mere vulgar, and might be compared to the pit of a theatre. The promiscuous multitude arranged themselves upon large banks of turf prepared for the purpose, which, aided by the natural elevation of the ground, enabled them to overlook the galleries, and obtain a fair view into the lists. Besides the accommodation which these stations afforded, many hundreds had perched themselves on the branches of the trees which surrounded the meadow; and even the steeple of a country church, at some distance, was crowded with spectators.

It only remains to notice respecting the general arrangement, that one gallery in the very centre of the

eastern side of the list, and consequently exactly opposite to the spot where the shock of the combat was to take place, was raised higher than the others, more richly decorated, and graced by a sort of throne and canopy, on which the royal arms were emblazoned. Squires, pages, and yeoman in rich liveries, waited around this place of honour, which was designed for Prince John and his attendants. Opposite to this royal gallery was another, elevated to the same height, on the western side of the lists, and more gaily, if less sumptuously, decorated than that destined for the Prince himself. A train of pages and of young maidens, the most beautiful who could be selected, gaily dressed in fancy habits of green and pink, surrounded a throne decorated in the same colours. Among pennons and flags bearing wounded hearts, burning hearts, bleeding hearts, bows and quivers, and all the common-place emblems of the triumphs of cupid, a blazoned inscription informed the spectators that this seat of honour was designed for *La Royne de la Beaulté et des Amours*. But who was to represent the Queen of Beauty and of Love on the present occasion, no one was prepared to guess.

Meanwhile spectators of every description thronged forward to occupy their respective stations, and not without many quarrels concerning those which they were entitled to hold. Some of these were settled by the men-at-arms with brief ceremony; the shafts of their battle-axes, and pummels of their swords, being readily employed as arguments to convince the more refractory. Others, which involved the rival claims of more elevated

Fair and true he hit the Norman on the visor.

'Come on, churl, an thou darest; thou shalt feel the strength of a miller's thumb.'

persons, were determined by the heralds, or by the two marshals of the field, William de Wyvil and Stephen de Martival, who, armed at all points, rode up and down the lists to enforce and preserve good order among the spectators.

Gradually the galleries became filled with knights and nobles, in their robes of peace, whose long and rich-tinted mantles were contrasted with the gayer and more splendid habits of the ladies, who, in a greater proportion than even the men themselves, thronged to witness a sport, which one would have thought too bloody and dangerous to afford their sex much pleasure. The lower and interior space was soon filled by substantial yeomen and burghers, and such of the lesser gentry, as, from modesty, poverty, or dubious title, durst not assume any higher place. It was of course amongst these that the most frequent disputes for precedence occurred.

'Dog of an unbeliever,' said an old man, whose thread-bare tunic bore witness to his poverty, as his sword, and dagger, and golden chain intimated his pretensions to rank,—'whelp of a she-wolf! darest thou press upon a Christian, and a Norman gentleman of the blood of Montdidier?'

This rough expostulation was addressed to no other than our acquaintance Isaac, who, richly and even magnificently dressed in a gaberdine ornamented with lace and lined with fur, was endeavouring to make place in the foremost row beneath the gallery for his daughter, the beautiful Rebecca, who had joined him at Ashby, and who was now hanging on her father's arm, not a

little terrified by the popular displeasure which seemed generally excited by her father's presumption. But Isaac, though we have seen him sufficiently timid on other occasions, knew well that at present he had nothing to fear. It was not in places of general resort, or where their equals were assembled, that any avaricious or malevolent noble durst offer him injury. At such meetings the Jews were under the protection of the general law; and if that proved a weak assurance, it usually happened that there were among the persons assembled some barons, who, for their own interested motives, were ready to act as their protectors. On the present occasion, Isaac felt more than usually confident, being aware that Prince John was even then in the very act of negotiating a large loan from the Jews of York, to be secured upon certain jewels and lands. Isaac's own share in this transaction was considerable, and he well knew that the Prince's eager desire to bring it to a conclusion would ensure him his protection in the dilemma in which he stood.

Emboldened by these considerations, the Jew pursued his point, and jostled the Norman Christian without respect either to his descent, quality, or religion. The complaints of the old man, however, excited the indignation of the bystanders. One of these, a stout well-set yeoman, arrayed in Lincoln green, having twelve arrows stuck in his belt, with a baldric and badge of silver, and a bow of six feet in length in his hand, turned short round; and, while his countenance, which his constant exposure to weather had rendered brown as a hazel nut, grew darker with anger, he advised the Jew to remember that

all the wealth he had acquired by sucking the blood of his miserable victims had but swelled him like a bloated spider, which might be overlooked while it kept in a corner, but would be crushed if it ventured into the light. This intimation, delivered in Norman-English with a firm voice and a stern aspect, made the Jew shrink back; and he would have probably withdrawn himself altogether from a vicinity so dangerous, had not the attention of every one been called to the sudden entrance of Prince John, who at that moment entered the lists, attended by a numerous and gay train, consisting partly of laymen, partly of churchmen, as light in their dress, and as gay in their demeanour, as their companions. Among the latter was the Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx, in the most gallant trim which a dignitary of the church could venture to exhibit. Fur and gold were not spared in his garments; and the points of his boots, out-heroding the preposterous fashion of the time, turned up so very far as to be attached, not to his knees merely, but to his very girdle, and effectually prevented him from putting his foot in the stirrup. This, however, was a slight inconvenience to the gallant Abbot, who, perhaps, even rejoicing in the opportunity to display his accomplished horsemanship before so many spectators, especially of the fair sex, dispensed with the use of these supports to a timid rider. The rest of Prince John's retinue consisted of the favourite leaders of his mercenary troops, some marauding barons and profligate attendants upon the court, with several Knights Templars and Knights of St. John.

It may be here remarked, that the knights of these two

orders were accounted hostile to King Richard, having adopted the side of Philip of France in the long train of disputes which took place in Palestine betwixt that Monarch and the lion-hearted King of England. It was the well-known consequence of this discord that Richard's repeated victories had been rendered fruitless, his romantic attempts to besiege Jerusalem disapppointed, and the fruit of all the glory which he had acquired had dwindled into an uncertain truce with the Sultan Saladin. With the same policy which had dictated the conduct of their brethren in the Holy Land, the Templars and Hospitallers in England and Normandy attached themselves to the faction of Prince John, having little reason to desire the return of Richard to England, or the succession of Arthur, his legitimate heir. For the opposite reason, Prince John hated and contemned the few Saxon families of consequence which subsisted in England, and omitted no opportunity of mortifying and affronting them, being conscious that his person and pretensions were disliked by them, as well as by the greater part of the English commons, who feared further innovation upon their rights and liberties, from a soverign of John's licentious and tyrannical disposition.

Attended by this gallant equipage, himself well mounted, and splendidly dressed in crimson and in gold, bearing upon his hand a falcon, and having his head covered by a rich fur bonnet, adorned with a circle of precious stones, from which his long curled hair escaped and overspread his shoulders, Prince John, upon a grey and high-mettled palfrey, caracoled within the lists at

the head of his jovial party, laughing loud with his train, and eyeing with all the boldness of royal criticism the beauties who adorned the lofty galleries.

Those who remarked in the physiognomy of the Prince a dissolute audacity, mingled with extreme haughtiness and indifference to the feelings of others, could not yet deny to his countenance that sort of comeliness which belongs to an open set of features, well formed by nature, modelled by art to the usual rules of courtesy, yet so far frank and honest that they seemed as if they disclaimed to conceal the natural workings of the soul. Such an expression is often mistaken for manly frankness, when in truth it arises from the reckless indifference of a libertine disposition, conscious of superiority of birth, of wealth, or of some other adventitious advantage, totally unconnected with personal merit. To those who did not think so deeply, and they were the greater number by a hundred to one, the splendour of Prince John's *rheno* (*i.e.* fur tippet), the richness of his cloak, lined with the most costly sables, his maroquin boots and golden spurs, together with the grace with which he managed his palfrey, were sufficient to merit clamorous applause.

In his joyous caracole round the lists, the attention of the Prince was called by the commotion, not yet subsided, which had attended the ambitious movement of Isaac towards the higher places of the assembly. The quick eye of Prince John instantly recognised the Jew, but was much more agreeably attracted by the beautiful daughter of Zion, who, terrified by the tumult, clung close to the arm of her aged father.

The figure of Rebecca might indeed have compared with the proudest beauties of England, even though it had been judged by as shrewd a connoisseur as Prince John. Her form was exquisitely symmetrical, and was shown to advantage by a sort of Eastern dress, which she wore according to the fashion of the females of her nation. Her turban of yellow silk suited well with the darkness of her complexion. The brilliancy of her eyes, the superb arch of her eyebrows, her well-formed aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearl, and the profusion of her sable tresses, which, each arranged in its own little spiral of twisted curls, fell down upon as much of a lovely neck and bosom as a simarre of the richest Persian silk, exhibiting flowers in their natural colours embossed upon a purple ground, permitted to be visible—all these constituted a combination of loveliness, which yielded not to the most beautiful of the maidens who surrounded her. It is true, that of the golden and pearl-studded clasps, which closed her vest from the throat to the waist, the three uppermost were left unfastened on account of the heat, which something enlarged the view of her jewellery. A diamond necklace, with pendants of inestimable value, were by this means made still more conspicious. The feather of an ostrich, fastened in her turban by an agriffe set with brilliants, was another distinction of the beautiful Jewess, scoffed and sneered at by the proud dames who sat above her, but secretly envied by those who affected to deride them.

'By the bald scalp of Abraham,' said Prince John, 'yonder Jewess must be the very model of that perfection,

whose charms drove frantic the wisest king that ever lived! What sayest thou, Prior Aymer?—By the temple of that wise king, which our wiser brother Richard proved unable to recover, she is the very Bride of the Canticles!'

'The Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley,'—answered the Prior, in a sort of snuffling tone; 'but your Grace must remember she is still but a Jewess.'

'Ay!' added Prince John, without heeding him, 'and there is my Mammon of unrighteousness too—the Marquis of Marks, the Baron of Byzants, contesting for place with penniless dogs, whose threadbare cloaks have not a single cross in their pouches to keep the devil from dancing there. By the body of St. Mark, my prince of supplies, with his lovely Jewess, shall have a place in the gallery!—What is she, Isaac? Thy wife or thy daughter, that Eastern houri that thou lockest under thy arm as thou wouldst thy treasure-casket?'

'My daughter Rebecca, so please your Grace,' answered Isaac, with a low congee, nothing embarrassed by the Prince's salutation, in which, however, there was at least as much mockery as courtesy.

'The wiser man, thou,' said John, with a peal of laughter, in which his gay followers obsequiously joined. 'But, daughter or wife, she should be preferred according to her beauty and thy merits.—Who sits above there?' he continued, bending his eye on the gallery. 'Saxon churls, lolling at their lazy length!—out upon them!—let them sit close, and make room for my prince of usurers and his lovely daughter. I'll make the hinds know they must share the high places of the synagogue with those whom

the synagogue properly belongs to.'

Those who occupied the gallery to whom this injurious and unpolite speech was addressed, were the family of Cedric the Saxon, with that of his ally and kinsman, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, a personage, who, on account of his descent from the last Saxon monarchs of England, was held in the highest respect by all the Saxon natives of the north of England. But with the blood of this ancient royal race, many of their infirmities had descended to Athelstane. He was comely in countenance, bulky and strong in person, and in the flower of his age—yet inanimate in expression, dull-eyed, heavy-browed, inactive and sluggish in all his motions, and so slow in resolution that the soubriquet of one of his ancestors was conferred upon him, and he was very generally called Athelstane the Unready. His friends, and he had many, who, as well as Cedric, were passionately attached to him, contended that this sluggish temper arose not from want of courage, but from mere want of decision; others alleged that his hereditary vice of drunkenness had obscured his faculties, never of a very acute order, and that the passive courage and meek good-nature which remained behind, were merely the dregs of a character that might have been deserving of praise, but of which all the valuable parts had flown off in the progress of a long course of brutal debauchery.

It was to this person, such as we have described him, that the Prince addressed his imperious command to make place for Isaac and Rebecca. Athelstane, utterly confounded at an order which the manners and feelings

of the times rendered so insulting, unwilling to obey, yet undetermined how to resist, opposed only the *vis inertiæ* to the will of John; and, without stirring or making any motion whatever of obedience, opened his large grey eyes, and stared at the Prince with an astonishment which had in it something extremely ludicrous. But the impatient John regarded it in no such light.

'The Saxon porker,' he said, 'is either asleep or minds me not—Prick him with your lance, De Bracy,' speaking to a knight who rode near him, the leader of a band of Free Companions, or Condottieri; that is, of mercenaries belonging to no particular nation, but attached for the time to any prince by whom they are paid. There was a murmer even among the attendants of Prince John; but De Bracy, whose profession freed him from all scruples, extended his long lance over the space which separated the gallery from the lists, and would have executed the commands of the Prince before Athelstane the Unready had recovered presence of mind sufficient even to draw back his person from the weapon, had not Cedric, as prompt as his companion was tardy, unsheathed, with speed of lightning, the short sword which he wore, and at a single blow severed the point of the lance from the handle. The blood rushed into the countenance of Prince John. He swore one of his deepest oaths, and was about to utter some threat corresponding in violence, when he was diverted from his purpose, partly by his own attendants, who gathered around him conjuring him to be patient, partly by a general exclamation of the crowd, uttered in loud applause the spirited conduct of Cedric.

The Prince rolled his eyes in indignation, as if to collect some safe and easy victim; and chancing to encounter the firm glance of the same archer whom we have already noticed, and who seemed to persist in his gesture of applause, in spite of the frowning aspect which the Prince bent upon him, he demanded the reason for clamouring thus.

'I always add my hollo,' said the yeoman, 'when I see a good shot or a gallant blow.'

'Sayest thou?' answered the Prince; 'then thou canst hit the white thyself, I'll warrant.'

'A woodsman's mark, and at woodsman's distance, I can hit,' answered the yeoman.

'And Wat Tyrrel's mark, at a hundred yards,' said a voice from behind, but by whom uttered could not be discerned.

This allusion to the fate of William Rufus, his relative, at once incensed and alarmed Prince John. He satisfied himself, however, with commanding the men-at-arms, who surrounded the lists, to keep an eye on the braggart, pointing to the yeoman.

'By St. Grizzel,' he added, 'we will try his own skill, who is so ready to give his voice to the feats of others!'

'I shall not fly the trial,' said the yeoman, with the composure which marked his whole deportment.

'Meanwhile, stand up, ye Saxon churls,' said the fiery Prince; 'for, by the light of Heaven, since I have said it, the Jew shall have his seat amongst ye!'

'By no means, an it please your Grace!—it is not fit for such as we to sit with the rulers of the land,' said the Jew; whose ambition for precedence, though it had led him

to dispute place with the extenuated and impoverished descendant of the line of Montdidier, by no means stimulated him to an intrusion upon the privileges of the wealthy Saxons.

'Up, infidel dog, when I command you,' said Prince John, 'or I will have thy swarthy hide stript off, and tanned for horse-furniture.'

Thus urged, the Jew began to ascend the steep and narrow steps which led up to the gallery.

'Let me see,' said the Prince, 'who dare stop him,' fixing his eye on Cedric, whose attitude intimated his intention to hurl the Jew down headlong.

The catastrophe was prevented by clown Wamba, who, springing betwixt his master and Isaac, and exclaiming, in answer to the Prince's defiance, 'Marry, that I will!' opposed to the beard of the Jew a shield of brawn, which he plucked from beneath his cloak, and with which, doubtless, he had furnished himself lest the tournament should have proved longer than his appetite could endure abstinence. Finding the abomination of his tribe opposed to his very nose, while the Jester at the same time flourished his wooden sword above his head, the Jew recoiled, missed his footing, and rolled down the steps—an excellent jest to the spectators, who set up a loud laughter, in which Prince John and his attendants heartily joined.

'Deal me the prize, cousin Prince,' said Wamba; 'I have vanquished my foe in fair fight with sword and shield,' he added, brandishing the brawn in one hand and the wooden sword in the other.

'Who, and what art thou, noble champion?' said Prince John, still laughing.

'A fool by right of descent,' answered the Jester; 'I am Wamba, the son of Witless, who was the son of Weatherbrain, who was the son of an Alderman.'

'Make room for the Jew in front of the lower ring,' said Prince John, not unwilling perhaps to seize an apology to desist from his original purpose; 'to place the vanquished beside the victor were false heraldry.'

'Knave upon fool were worse,' answered the Jester, 'and Jew upon bacon worst of all.'

'Gramercy! good fellow,' cried Prince John, 'thou pleases me—Here, Isaac, lend me a handful of byzants.'

As the Jew, stunned by the request, afraid to refuse, and unwilling to comply, fumbled in the furred bag which hung by his girdle, and was perhaps endeavouring to ascertain how few coins might pass for a handful, the Prince stooped from his jennet and settled Isaac's doubts by snatching the pouch itself from his side; and flinging to Wamba a couple of the gold pieces which it contained, he pursued his career round the lists, leaving the Jew to the derision of those around him, and himself receiving as much applause from the spectators as if he had done some honest and honourable action.

In the midst of his cavalcade, however, he suddenly stopt, and, appealing to the Prior of Jorvaulx, declared the principal business of the day had been forgotten.

'By my halidom,' he said, 'we have forgotten, Sir Prior, to name the fair Sovereign of Love and of Beauty, by whose white hand the palm is to be distributed. For my

part, I am liberal in my ideas, and I care not if I give my vote for the black-eyed Rebeccca.'

'Holy Virgin,' answered the Prior, turning up his eyes in horror, 'a Jewess!—We should deserve to be stoned out of the lists; and I am not quite old enough to be a martyr. Besides, I swear by my patron saint, that she is far inferior to the lovely Saxon, Rowena.'

'Saxon or Jew,' answered the Prince, 'Saxon or Jew, dog or hog, what matters it? I say, name Rebecca, were it only to mortify the Saxon churls.'

A murmer arose even among his own immediate attendants.

'This passes a jest, my lord,' said De Bracy; 'no knight here will lay lance in rest if such an insult is attempted.'

'It is the mere wantonness of insult,' said one of the oldest and most important of Prince John's followers, Waldemar Fitzurse; 'and, if your Grace attempts it, cannot but prove ruinous to your projects.'

'I entertained you, sir,' said John, reining up his palfrey haughtily, 'for my follower, but not for my counsellor.'

'Those who follow your Grace in the paths which you tread,' said Waldemar, but speaking in a low voice, 'acquire the right of counsellors; for your interest and safety are not more deeply engaged than their own.'

From the tone in which this was spoken, John saw the necessity of acquiescence. 'I did but jest,' he said; 'and you turn upon me like so many adders! Name whom you will, in the fiend's name, and please yourselves.'

'Nay, nay,' said De Bracy, 'let the fair sovereign's throne remain unoccupied, until the conqueror shall be

named, and then let him choose the lady by whom it shall be filled. It will add another grace to his triumph, and teach fair ladies to prize the love of valiant knights who can exalt them to such distinction.'

'If Brian de Bois-Guilbert gain the prize,' said the Prior, 'I will gage my rosary that I name the Sovereign of Love and Beauty.'

'Bois-Guilbert,' answered De Bracy, 'is a good lance; but there are others around these list, Sir Prior, who will not fear to encounter him.'

'Silence, sirs,' said Waldemar, 'and let the Prince assume his seat. The knights and spectators are alike impatient, the time advances, and highly fit it is that the sports should commence.'

CHAPTER V

The Prince, assuming his throne, and being surrounded by his followers, gave signal to the heralds to proclaim the laws of the tournament, which were briefly as follows:

First, the five challengers were to undertake all comers.

Secondly, any knight proposing to combat, might, if he pleased, select a special antagonist from among the challengers, by touching his shield. If he did so with the reverse of his lance, the trial of skill was made with what were called the arms of courtesy, that is, with lances at whose extremity a piece of round flat board was fixed, so that no danger was encountered, save from the shock of the horses and riders. But if the shield was touched with the sharp end of the lance, the combat was understood to be at *outrance*, that is, the knights were to fight with sharp weapons, as in actual battle.

Thirdly, when the knights present had accomplished their vow, by each of them breaking five lances, the Prince was to declare the victor in the first day's tourney, who should receive as prize a war-horse of exquisite beauty and matchless strength; and in addition to this reward of valour, it was now declared, he should have the peculiar honour of naming the Queen of Love and Beauty, by whom the prize should be given on the ensuing day.

Fourthly, it was announced, that, on the second day, there should be a general tournament, in which all the knights present, who were desirous to win praise, might

take part, and, being divided into two bands of equal numbers, might fight it out manfully, until the signal was given by Prince John to cease the combat. The elected Queen of Love and Beauty was then to crown the knight whom the Prince should adjudge to have borne himself best in this second day, with a coronet composed of thin gold plate, cut into the shape of a laurel crown. On this second day the knightly games ceased. But on that which was to follow, feats of archery, of bull-baiting, and other popular amusements, were to be practised, for the more immediate amusement of the populace. In this manner did Prince John endeavour to lay the foundation of a popularity, which he was perpetually throwing down by some inconsiderate act of wanton aggression upon the feelings and prejudices of the people.

The lists now presented a most splendid spectacle. The sloping galleries were crowded with all that was noble, great, wealthy, and beautiful in the northern and midland parts of England; and the contrast of the various dresses of these dignified spectators, rendered the view as gay as it was rich, while the interior and lower space, filled with the substantial burgesses and yeoman of merry England, formed, in their more plain attire, a dark fringe, or border, around this circle of brilliant embroidery, relieving and, at the same time, setting off its splendour.

The heralds finished their proclamation with their usual cry of 'Largesse, largesse, gallant knights!' and gold and silver pieces were showered on them from the galleries, it being a high point of chivalry to exhibit liberality towards those whom the age accounted at once

the secretaries and historians of honour. The bounty of the spectators was acknowledged by the customary shouts of 'Love of Ladies—Death of Champions—Honour to the Generous—Glory to the Brave!' To which the more humble spectators added their acclamations, and a numerous band of trumpeters the flourish of their martial instruments. When these sounds had ceased, the heralds withdrew from the lists in gay and glittering procession, and none remained within them save the marshals of the field, who, armed cap-à-pie, sat on horseback, motionless as statues, at the opposite ends of the lists. Meantime, the enclosed space at the northern extremity of the lists, large as it was, was now completely crowded with knights desirous to prove their skill against the challengers, and, when viewed from the galleries, presented the appearance of a sea of waving plumage, intermixed with glistening helmets, and tall lances, to the extremities of which were, in many cases, attached small pennons of about a span's breadth, which, fluttering in the air as the breeze caught them, joined with the restless motion of the feathers to add liveliness to the scene.

At length the barriers were opened, and five knights, chosen by lot, advanced slowly, while the bells seemed to bid welcome at once, and defiance, to the knights as they advanced. With the eyes of an immense concourse of spectators fixed upon them, the five knights advanced up to the platform upon which the tents of the challengers stood, and, there separating themselves, each touched slightly, and with the reverse of his lance, the shield of the antagonist to whom he wished to oppose himself. The

lower orders of spectators in general—nay, many of the higher class, and it is even said several of the ladies, were rather disappointed at the champions choosing the arms of courtesy. For the same sort of persons who, in the present day, applaud most highly the deepest tragedies, were then interested in a tournament exactly in proportion to the danger incurred by the champions engaged.

Having intimated their more pacific purpose, the champions retreated to the extremity of the lists, where they remained drawn up in a line; while the challengers, sallying each from his pavilion, mounted their horses, and, headed by Brian Bois-Guilbert, descended from the platform, and opposed themselves individually to the knights who had touched their respective shields.

At the flourish of clarions and trumpets, they started out against each other at full gallop; and such was the superior dexterity or good fortune of the challengers, that those opposed to Bois-Guilbert, Malvoisin, and Front-de-Bœuf, rolled on the ground. The antagonist of Grantmesnil, instead of bearing his lance-point fair against the crest or shield of his enemy, swerved so much from the direct line as to break the weapon athwart the person of his opponent—a circumstance which was accounted more disgraceful than that of being actually unhorsed; because the latter might happen from accident, whereas the former evinced awkwardness and want of management of the weapon and the horse. The fifth knight alone maintained the honour of his party, and parted fairly with the Knight of St. John, both splintering their lances without advantage on either side.

The shouts of the multitude, together with the acclamations of the heralds and the clangour of the trumpets announced the triumph of the victors and the defeat of the vanquished. The former retreated to their pavilions, and the latter, gathering themselves up as they could, withdrew from the lists in disgrace and dejection, to agree with their victors concerning the redemption of their arms and their horses, which, according to the laws of the tournament, they had forfeited. The fifth of their number alone tarried in the lists long enough to be greeted by the applause of the spectators, amongst whom he retreated, to the aggravation, doubtless, of his companions' mortification.

A second and a third party of knights took the field; and although they had various success, yet, upon the whole, the advantage decidedly remained with the challengers, not one of whom lost his seat or swerved from his charge—misfortunes which befel one or two of their antagonists in each encounter. The spirits, therefore, of those opposed to them, seemed to be considerably damped by their continued success. Three knights only appeared on the fourth entry, who, avoiding the shields of Bois-Guilbert and Front-de-Bœuf, contented themselves with touching those of the three other knights, who had not altogether manifested the same strength and dexterity. This politic selection did not alter the fortune of the field, the challengers being still successful: one of their antagonists was overthrown, and both the others failed in the attaint, that is, in striking the helmet and shield of their antagonist firmly and strongly, with the

lance held in a direct line, so that the weapon might break, unless the champion was over-thrown.

After this fourth encounter, there was a considerable pause; nor did it appear that any one was very desirous of renewing the contest. The spectators murmured among themselves; for, among the challengers, Malvoisin and Front-de-Bœuf were unpopular from their characters, and the others, except Grantmesnil, were disliked as strangers and foreigners.

But none shared the general feeling of dissatisfaction so keenly as Cedric the Saxon, who saw, in each advantage gained by the Norman challengers, a repeated triumph over the honour of England. His own education had taught him no skill in the games of chivalry, although, with the arms of his Saxon ancestors, he had manifested himself, on many occasions, a brave and determined soldier. He looked anxiously at Athelstane, who had learned the accomplishments of the age, as if desiring that he should make some personal effort to recover the victory which was passing into the hands of the Templar and his associates. But, though both stout of heart and strong of person, Athelstane had a disposition too inert and unambitious to make the exertions which Cedric seemed to expect from him.

'The day is against England, my lord,' said Cedric, in a marked tone; 'are you not tempted to take the lance?'

'I shall tilt to-morrow,' answered Athelstane, 'in the *mêlée*, it is not worth while for me to arm myself to-day.'

Two things displeased Cedric in this speech. It contained the Norman word *mêlée* (to express the general

conflict), and it evinced some indifference to the honour of the country; but it was spoken by Athelstane, whom he held in such profound respect that he would not trust himself to canvas his motives or his foibles. Moreover, he had no time to make any remark, for Wamba thrust in his word, observing, 'It was better, though scarce easier, to be the best man among a hundred, than the best man of two.'

Athelstane took the observation as a serious compliment; but Cedric, who better understood the jester's meaning, darted at him a severe and menacing look; and lucky it was for Wamba, perhaps, that the time and place prevented his receiving, notwithstanding his place and service, more sensible marks of his master's resentment.

The pause in the tournament was still uninterrupted, excepting by the voices of the heralds exclaiming—'Love of ladies, splintering of lances! stand forth, gallant knights, fair eyes look upon your deeds!'

The music also of the challengers breathed from time to time wild bursts expressive of triumph or defiance, while the clowns grudged a holiday which seemed to pass away in activity; and old knights and nobles lamented in whispers the decay of martial spirit, spoke of the triumphs of their younger days, but agreed that the land did not now supply dames of such transcendent beauty as had animated the jousts of former times. Prince John began to talk to his attendants about making ready banquet, and the necessity of adjudging the prize to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had, with a single spear, over-thrown two knights, and foiled a third.

At length, as the Saracenic music of the challengers concluded one of those long and high flourishes with which they had broken the silence of the lists, it was answered by a solitary trumpet, which breathed a note of defiance from the northern extremity. All eyes were turned to see the new champion whom these sounds announced, and no sooner were the barriers opened than he paced into the lists. As far as could be judged of a man sheathed in armour, the new adventurer did not greatly exceed the middle size, and seemed to be rather slender than strongly made. His suit of armour was formed of steel, richly inlaid with gold, and the device on his shield was a young oak tree pulled up by the roots, with the Spanish word *Desdichado*, signifying Disinherited. He was mounted on a gallant black horse; and as he passed through the lists, he gracefully saluted the Prince and the ladies by lowering his lance. The dexterity with which he managed his steed, and something of youthful grace which he displayed in his manner, won him the favour of the multitude, which some of the lower classes expressed by calling out, 'Touch Ralph de Vipont's shield—touch the Hospitaller's shield; he has the least sure seat, he is your cheapest bargain'.

The champion, moving onward amid the well-meant hints, ascended the platform by the sloping alley which led to it from the lists, and, to the astonishment of all present, riding straight up to the central pavilion, struck with the sharp end of his spear the shield of Brian de Bois-Guilbert until it rung again. All stood astonished at his presumption, but none more than the redoubted

Knight, whom he had thus defied to mortal combat, and who, little expecting so rude a challenge, was standing carelessly at the door of the pavilion.

'Have you confessed yourself, brother,' said the Templar, 'and have you heard mass this morning, that you peril your life so frankly?'

'I am fitter to meet death than thou art,' answered the Disinherited Knight; for by this name the stranger had recorded himself in the books of the tourney.

'Then take your place in the lists,' said de Bois-Guilbert, 'and look your last upon the sun; for this night thou shalt sleep in paradise.'

'Gramercy for thy courtesy', replied the Disinherited Knight, 'and to requite it, I advise thee to take a fresh horse and a new lance, for by my honour you will need both.'

Having expressed himself thus confidently, he reined his horse backward down the slope which he had ascended, and compelled him in the same manner to move backward through the lists till he reached the northern extremity, where he remained stationary, in expectation of his antagonist. This feat of horsemanship again attracted the applause of the multitude.

However incensed at his adversary for the precautions which he recommended, Brian de Bois-Guilbert did not neglect his advice; for his honour was too nearly concerned to permit his neglecting any means which might ensure victory over his presumptuous opponent. He changed his horse for a proved and fresh one of great strength and spirit. He chose a new and tough spear, lest

the wood of the former might have been strained in the previous encounters he had sustained. Lastly, he laid aside his shield, which had received some little damage, and received another from his squires. His first had only borne the general device of the rider, representing two knights riding upon one horse, an emblem expressive of the original humility and poverty of the Templars, qualities which they had since exchanged for the arrogance and wealth that finally occasioned their suppression. Bois-Guilbert's new shield bore a raven in full flight, holding in its claws a skull, and bearing the motto, *Gare le Corbeau.*

When the two champions stood opposed to each other at the two extremities of the lists, the public expectation was strained to the highest pitch. Few augured the possibility that the encounter could terminate well for the Disinherited Knight, yet his courage and gallantry secured the general good wishes of the spectators.

The trumpets had no sooner given the signal, than the champions vanished from their posts with the speed of lightning, and closed in the centre of the lists with the shock of a thunderbolt. The lances burst into shivers up to the very grasp, and it seemed at the moment that both knights had fallen, for the shock had made each horse recoil backwards upon its haunches. The address of the riders recovered their steeds by use of the bridle and spur; and, having glared on each other for an instant with eyes which seemed to flash fire through the bars of their visors, each made a demi-volte, and, retiring to the extremity of the lists, received a fresh lance from the attendants.

A loud shout from the spectators, waving of scarfs and handkerchiefs, and general acclamations, attested the interest taken by the spectators in this encounter, the most equal, as well as the best performed, which had graced the day. But no sooner had the knights resumed their station, than the clamour of applause was hushed into a silence, so deep and so dead, that it seemed the multitude were afraid even to breathe.

A few minutes' pause having been allowed, that the combatants and their horses might recover breath, Prince John with his truncheon signed to the trumpets to sound the onset. The champions a second time sprang from their stations and closed in the centre of the lists, with the same speed, the same dexterity, the same violence, but not the same equal fortune as before.

In this second encounter, the Templar aimed at the centre of his antagonist's shield, and struck it so fair and forcibly that his spear went to shivers, and the Disinherited Knight reeled in his saddle. On the other hand, that champion had in the beginning directed the point of his lance towards Bois-Guilbert's shield, but, changing his aim almost in the moment of encounter, he addressed it to the helmet, a mark more difficult to hit, but which, if attained, rendered the shock more irresistible. Fair and true he hit the Norman on the visor, where his lance's point kept hold of the bars. Yet, even at this disadvantage the Templar sustained his high reputation; and, had not the girths of his saddle burst, he might not have been unhorsed. As it chanced, however, saddle, horse, and man, rolled on the ground under a cloud of dust.

To extricate himself from the stirrups and fallen steed, was to the Templar scarce the work of a moment; and, stung with madness, both at his disgrace and at the acclamations with which it was hailed by the spectators, he drew his sword and waved it in defiance of his conqueror. The Disinherited Knight sprang from his steed, and also unsheathed his sword. The marshals of the field, however, spurred their horses between them, and reminded them that the laws of the tournament did not, on the present occasion, permit this species of encounter.

'We shall meet again, I trust,' said the Templar, casting a resentful glance at his antagonist; 'and where there are none to separate us.'

'If we do not,' said the Disinherited Knight, 'the fault shall not be mine. On foot or horseback, with spear, with axe, or with sword, I am alike ready to encounter thee.'

More and angrier words would have been exchanged, but the marshals, crossing their lances betwixt them, compelled them to separate. The Disinherited Knight returned to his first station, and Bois-Guilbert to his tent, where he remained for the rest of the day in an agony of despair.

Without alighting from his horse, the conqueror called for a bowl of wine, and opening the beaver, or lower part of the helmet, announced that he quaffed it, 'To all true English hearts, and to the confusion of foreign tyrants.' He then commanded his trumpet to sound a defiance to the challengers, and desired a herald to announce to them, that he should make no election, but was willing to encounter them in the order in which they pleased to advance against him.

The gigantic Front-de-Bœuf, armed in sable armour, was the first who took the field. He bore on a white shield a black bull's head, half defaced by the numerous encounters which he had undergone, and bearing the arrogant motto, *Cave, adsum.* Over this champion the Disinherited Knight obtained a slight but decisive advantage. Both Knights broke their lances fairly, but Front-de-Bœuf, who lost a stirrup in the encounter, was adjudged to have the disadvantage.

In the stranger's third encounter with Sir Philip Malvoisin, he was equally successful, striking that baron so forcibly on the casque that the laces of the helmet broke, and Malvoisin, only saved from falling by being unhelmeted, was declared vanquished like his companions.

In his fourth combat, with De Grantmesnil, the Disinherited Knight showed as much courtesy as he had hitherto evinced courage and dexterity. De Grantmesnil's horse, which was young and violent, reared and plunged in the course of the career so as to disturb the rider's aim, and the stranger declining to take the advantage which this accident afforded him, raised his lance, and, passing his antagonist without touching him, wheeled his horse and rode back again to his own end of the lists, offering his antagonist, by a herald, the chance of a second encounter. This De Grantmesnil declined, avowing himself vanquished as much by the courtesy as by the address of his opponent.

Ralph de Vipont summed up the list of the stranger's triumphs, being hurled to the ground with such force that the blood gushed from his nose and his mouth, and

he was borne senseless from the lists.

The acclamations of thousands applauded the unanimous award of the Prince and the marshals, announcing that day's honours to the Disinherited Knight, whose privilege it was, therefore, to name the fair lady who was to preside over next day's festival.

The knight paced slowly forwards, and at length paused beneath the balcony in which the Lady Rowena was placed, and then gradually and gracefully sinking the point of his lance he deposited the coronet of victory at her feet.

CHAPTER VI

The Disinherited Knight had no sooner reached his pavilion than squires and pages in abundance tendered their services. Their zeal on this occasion was perhaps sharpened by curiosity, since every one desired to know who the knight was that had gained so many laurels, yet had refused, even at the command of Prince John, to lift his visor or to give his name. But their officious inquisitiveness was not to be gratified. The Disinherited Knight refused all other assistance save that of his own squire, or rather yeoman—a clownish-looking man, who seemed to affect the incognito as much as his master. All others being excluded from the tent, this attendant relieved his master from the more burdensome parts of his armour, and placed food and wine before him.

The Knight had scarcely finished a hasty meal, ere his menial announced to him that five men, each leading a barbed steed, desired to speak with him.

The Disinherited Knight stept forth to the front of his tent, and found in attendance the squires of the challengers, each of whom led his master's charger, loaded with the armour in which he had that day fought.

'According to the laws of chivalry,' said the foremost of these men 'I, Baldwin de Oyley, squire to the redoubted Knight Brian de Bois-Guilbert, make offer to you, styling yourself, for the present, the Disinherited Knight, of the

horse and armour used by the said Brian de Bois-Guilbert in this day's Passage of Arms, leaving it with your nobleness to retain or to ransom the same, according to your pleasure; for such is the law of arms.'

The other squires repeated nearly the same formula, and then stood to await the decision of the Disinherited Knight.

'To you four, sirs,' answered the Knight, 'I have one common reply. Commend me to the noble knights, your masters, and say, I should do ill to deprive them of steeds and arms which can never be used by braver cavaliers; but being, as I termed myself, in truth and earnest, the Disinherited, I must be thus far bound to your masters, that they will, of their courtesy, be pleased to ransom their steeds and armour.'

'We stand commissioned, each of us,' answered the squire of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, 'to offer a hundred zecchins in ransom of these horses and suits of armour.'

'It is sufficient,' said the Disinherited Knight. 'Half the sum my present necessities compel me to accept; of the remaining half, distribute one moiety among yourselves, sir squires, and divide the other half betwixt the attendants.'

The squires expressed their deep sense of a courtesy and generosity not often practised, at least upon a scale so extensive. The Disinherited Knight then addressed his discourse to Baldwin, the squire of Brian de Bois-Guilbert. 'From your master,' said he, 'I will accept neither arms nor ransom. Say to him in my name, that our strife is not ended—no, not till we have fought as well with swords

as with lances—as well on foot as on horseback. To this mortal quarrel he has himself defied me, and I shall not forget the challenge.'

'My master,' answered Baldwin, 'knows how to requite scorn with scorn, and blows with blows, as well as courtesy with courtesy. Since you disdain to accept from him any share of the ransom at which you have rated the arms of the other knights, I must leave this armour and his horse here, being well assured that he will never deign to mount the one nor wear the other.'

'You have spoken well, good squire,' said the Disinherited Knight. 'Leave not, however, the horse and armour here. Restore them to thy master; or, if he scorns to accept them, retain them, good friend, for thine own use. So far as they are mine, I bestow them upon you freely.'

Baldwin made a deep obeisance, and retired with his companions; and the Disinherited Knight entered the pavilion.

'Thus far, Gurth,' said he, addressing his attendant, 'the reputation of English chivalry hath not suffered in my hands.'

'And I,' said Gurth, 'for a Saxon swineherd, have not ill played the personage of a Norman squire.'

'Take this bag of gold to Ashby,' continued his master, 'and find out Isaac the Jew of York, and let him pay himself for the horse and arms.'

'I will do so,' said Gurth, taking the bag under his cloak, and leaving the apartment; 'and it will go hard,' he muttered, 'but I content him with one-half of his own

asking.' And he started for the village of Ashby, or rather to a country house in its vicinity belonging to a wealthy Israelite, with whom Isaac, his daughter, and retinue, had taken up their quarters.

In an apartment of this house, richly furnished with decorations of an Oriental taste, Rebecca was watching the motions of her father with a look of anxious and filial affection, while he paced the apartment with a dejected mien and disordered step.

The evening was now becoming dark, when a Jewish servant entered, and informed Isaac that a Nazarene (so they term Christians, while conversing among themselves) desired to speak with him. Isaac at once replaced on the table the untasted glass of Greek wine which he had just raised to his lips, and saying hastily to his daughter, 'Rebecca, veil thyself,' commanded the stranger to be admitted.

Just as Rebecca had dropped over her fine features a screen of silver gauze which reached to her feet, the door opened, and Gurth entered.

'Art thou Isaac the Jew of York?' said Gurth.

'I am,' replied Isaac, 'and who art thou?'

'That is not to the purpose,' answered Gurth.

'As much as my name is to thee,' replied Isaac; 'for without knowing thine, how can I hold intercourse with thee?'

'Easily,' answered Gurth; 'I, being to pay money, must know that I deliver it to the right person; thou, who art to receive it, wilt not, I think, care very greatly by whose hands it is delivered.'

'Oh!' said the Jew, 'you are come to pay moneys?—Holy Father Abraham! that altereth our relation to each other. And from whom dost thou bring it?'

'From the Disinherited Knight,' said Gurth, 'victor in this day's tournament. It is the price of the armour supplied to him by Kirjath Jairam of Leicester, on thy recommendation. The steed is restored to thy stable. I desire to know the amount of the sum which I am to pay for the armour.'

'I said he was a good youth!' exclaimed Isaac with joyful exultation. 'A cup of wine will do thee no harm,' he added, filling and handing to the swineherd a richer draft than Gurth had ever before tasted. 'And how much money,' continued Isaac, 'hast thou brought with thee?'

'Holy Virgin!' said Gurth, setting down the cup, 'what nectar these unbelieving dogs drink, while true Christians are fain to quaff ale as muddy and thick as the draff we give to hogs!—What money have I brought with me?' continued the Saxon, when he had finished this uncivil ejaculation, 'even but a small sum; something in hand the whilst.'

'Nay, but,' said Isaac, 'thy master has won goodly steeds and rich armours with the strength of his lance and of his right hand.'

'My master has disposed of them,' said Gurth.

'Ah! that was wrong,' said the Jew,'that was the part of a fool. No Christians here could buy so many horses and armour—no Jew except myself would give him half the values. But I would take eighty zecchins for the good

steed and rich armour, which leaves me not a guilder's profit. Have you money to pay me?'

'Barely,' said Gurth, though the sum demanded was more reasonable than he expected, 'and it will leave my master nigh penniless. Nevertheless, if such be your offer, I must be content.'

'Fill thyself another goblet of wine,' said the Jew. 'Ah! eighty zecchins is too little. It leaveth no profit for the usages of the money; and, besides, the good horse may have suffered wrong in this day's encounter.'

'And I say,' replied Gurth, 'he is sound, wind and limb; and you may see him now in your stable. And I say, over and above, that seventy zecchins is enough for the armour, and I hope a Christian's word is as good as a Jew's. If you will not take seventy, I will carry this bag' (and he shook it till the contents jingled) 'back to my master.'

'Nay, nay!' said Isaac; 'lay down the talents—the shekels—the eighty zecchins, and thou shalt see I will consider thee liberally.'

Gurth at length complied; and telling out eighty zecchins upon the table, the Jew delivered out to him an acquittance for the horse and suit of armour. The Jew's hand trembled for joy as he wrapped up the first seventy pieces of gold. The last ten he told over with much deliberation, pausing, and saying something as he took each piece from the table, and dropt it into his purse. It seemed as if his avarice were struggling with his better nature, while his generosity urged him to restore some part at least. His whole speech ran nearly thus:

'Seventy-one—seventy-two; thy master is a good youth—seventy-three, an excellent youth—seventy-four—that piece hath been clipt within the ring—seventy-five—and that looketh light of weight—seventy-six—when thy master wants money, let him come to Isaac of York—seventy-seven—that is, with reasonable security.' Here he made a considerable pause, and Gurth had good hope that the last three pieces might escape the fate of the comrades; but the Jew proceeded.—'Seventy-eight—thou art a good fellow—seventy-nine—and deservest something——'

Here the Jew paused again, and looked at the last zecchin, intending, doubtless, to bestow it upon Gurth. He weighed it upon the tip of his finger, and made it ring by dropping it upon the table. Had it rung too flat, or had it felt a hair's breadth too light, generosity had carried the day; but unhappily for Gurth, the chime was full and true, the zecchin plump, newly coined, and a grain above weight. Isaac could not find it in his heart to part with it, so dropt it into his purse as if in absence of mind, with the words, 'Eighty completed the tale, and I trust thy master will reward thee handsomely.—Surely,' he added, looking earnestly at the bag, 'thou hast more coins in that pouch?'

Gurth grinned, which was his nearest approach to a laugh, as he replied, 'About the same quantity which thou hast just told over so carefully.' He then folded the acquittance, and put it under his cap, adding,—'Peril of thy beard, Jew, see that this be full and ample!' He filled himself, a third goblet of wine, and left the apartment.

'Rebecca,' said the Jew, 'that Ishmaelite hath gone somewhat beyond me. Nevertheless his master is a good youth.'

As he turned to receive Rebecca's answer, he observed that, during his chaffering with Gurth, she had left the apartment unperceived.

Meanwhile, Gurth had descended the stair, when a figure in white beckoned him into a side apartment. He had some reluctance to obey the summons. Rough and impetuous as a wild boar, where only earthly force was to be apprehended, he had all the characteristic terrors of a Saxon respecting fawns, forest-fiends, white women, and the whole of the superstitions which his ancestors had brought with them from the wilds of Germany. Nevertheless, after a moment's pause, he obeyed the beckoning summons of the apparition, and followed her into the apartment, where he found to his joyful surprise that his fair guide was the beautiful Jewess.

'My father did but jest with thee, good fellow,' said Rebecca; 'he owes thy master deeper kindness than these arms and steeds could pay, were their value tenfold. In this purse thou wilt find a hundred. Restore to thy master that which is his due, and enrich thyself with the remainder. Haste—begone—stay not to render thanks! and beware how you pass through this crowded town, where thou mayest easily lose both thy burden and thy life.'

'By St. Dunstan,' said Gurth, as he stumbled up the dark avenue, 'this is no Jewess, but an angel from heaven!'

CHAPTER VII

The nocturnal adventures of Gurth were not yet concluded; indeed he himself became partly of that mind, when, after passing the outskirts of the village, he found himself in a deep lane, running between two banks overgrown with hazel and holly.

'The Jewess was right,' he said to himself. 'By heaven and St. Dunstan, I would I were safe at my journey's end with all this treasure!'

He accordingly hastened his pace, in order to gain the open common to which the land led, but just as he had attained the upper end of the lane, where the underwood was thickest, four men sprang upon him, and seized him so fast that resistance, if at first practicable, would have been now too late.—'Surrender your charge,' said one of them; 'we are the deliverers of the commonwealth, who ease every man of his burden.'

'You should not ease me of mine so lightly,' muttered Gurth, 'had I but in my power to give three strokes in its defence.'

'We shall see that presently,' said the robber. 'I see he would have his head broken, as well as his purse cut.'

Gurth was compelled to follow his rough conductors until they stopped unexpectedly in an irregular open space, free in a great measure from trees, and on which, therefore, the beams of the moon fell without much interruption from boughs and leaves. Here his captors were

joined by two other persons, apparently belonging to the gang. They had short swords by their sides, and quarter-staves in their hands, and all six wore visors.

'What money hast thou, churl?' said one of them.

'Thirty zecchins of my own property,' answered Gurth doggedly.

'A forfeit—a forfeit,' shouted the robbers; 'a Saxon hath thirty zecchins and returns sober from a village!'

'I hoarded it to buy my freedom,' said Gurth.

'Thou art an ass,' replied one of the thieves; 'three quarts of a double ale had rendered thee as free as thy master, ay, and freer too, if he be a Saxon like thyself.'

'A sad truth,' replied Gurth; 'but if these same thirty zecchins will buy my freedom from you, unloose my hands, and I will pay them to you.'

'Hold,' said one who seemed to exercise some authority over the others; 'this bag which thou bearest, as I can feel through thy cloak, contains more coin than thou hast told us of.'

'It is the good knight my master's,' answered Gurth, 'of which, assuredly, I would not have spoken a word, had you been satisfied with working your will upon mine own property.'

'Thou art an honest fellow,' replied the robber, 'I warrant thee; and we worship not St. Nicholas so devoutly but what thy thirty zecchins may yet escape, if thou deal uprightly with us.—Who is thy master?'

'The Disinherited Knight,' said Gurth.

'Whose good lance,' replied the robber, 'won the prize in to-day's tourney? How comes thy master by this gold?'

'By his good lance,' answered Gurth—'These bags contain the ransom of four good horses, and four good suits of armour.'

'How much is there?' demanded the robber.

'Two hundred zecchins.'

'Only two hundred zecchins!' said the bandit; 'your master hath dealt liberally by the vanquished, and put them to a cheap ransom. Name those who paid the gold.'

Gurth did so.

'The armour and horse of the Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert, at what ransom were they held?'

'My master,' replied Gurth, 'will take nought from the Templar save his life's-blood.'

'Indeed!'—repeated the robber. 'And what wert thou now doing at Ashby with such a charge in thy custody?'

'I went thither to render to Isaac the Jew of York,' replied Gurth, 'the price of a suit of armour with which he fitted my master for this tournament.'

'And how much didst thou pay to Isaac?—Methinks to judge by weight, there is still two hundred zecchins in that pouch.'

'I paid to Isaac,' said the Saxon, 'eighty zecchins, and he restored me a hundred in lieu thereof.'

'How! what!' exclaimed all the robbers at once; 'darest thou trifle with us?'

'What I tell you,' said Gurth, 'is as true as the moon is in heaven. You will find the just sum in a silken purse within the leathern pouch.'

'Bethink thee, man,' said the Captain, 'thou speakest of a Jew, as unapt to restore gold as the dry sand of his

deserts to return the cup of water which the pilgrim spills upon them.'

'It is, however, as I say,' said Gurth.

'Strike a light instantly,' said the Captain; 'I will examine this said purse.'

A light was procured accordingly, and the robber proceeded to examine the purse. The others crowded around him, and even two who had hold of Gurth relaxed their grasp while they stretched their necks to see the issue of the search. Availing himself of their negligence, Gurth shook himself free of their hold, and might have escaped, could he have resolved to leave his master's property behind him. But such was no part of his intention. He wrenched a quarter-staff from one of the fellows, struck down the Captain, and had well-nigh repossessed himself of the pouch and treasure. The thieves, however, were too nimble for him, and again secured both the bag and the trusty Gurth.

'Knave!' said the Captain, getting up, 'thou hast broken my head; and with other men of our sort thou wouldst fare the worse for thy insolence. But thou shalt know thy fate instantly. First let us speak of thy master; the knight's matters must go before the squire's, according to the due order of chivalry. Stand thou fast in the meantime—if thou stir again, thou shalt have that will make thee quiet for thy life—Comrades!' he then said, addressing his gang, 'this purse is embroidered with Hebrew characters, and I well believe the yeoman's tale is true. The errant knight, his master, must needs pass us toll-free. He is too like ourselves for us to make booty of him.'

'Like us?' answered one of the gang; 'I should like to hear how that is made good.'

'Why, thou fool,' answered the Captain, 'is he not poor and disinherited as we are?—Doth he not win his substance at the sword's point as we do?—Hath he not beaten Front-de-Bœuf and Malvoisin, even as we would beat them if we could? Is he not the enemy to life and death of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whom we have so much reason to fear? And were all this otherwise, wouldst thou have us show a worse conscience than an unbeliever, a Hebrew Jew?'

'Nay, that were a shame,' muttered the other fellow; 'and yet this insolent peasant,—he too, I warrant me, is to be dismissed scatheless?'

'Not if *thou* canst scathe him,' replied the Captain.—'Here fellow,' continued he, addressing Gurth, 'canst thou use the staff that thou starts to it so readily?'

'I think,' said Gurth, 'thou shouldst be best able to reply to that question.'

'Nay, by my troth, thou gavest me a round knock,' replied the Captain; 'do as much for this fellow, and thou shalt pass scot-free; and if thou dost not—why, by my faith, as thou art such a sturdy knave, I think I must pay the ransom myself.—Take thy staff, Miller,' he added, 'and keep thy head.'

The two champions, being alike armed with quarter-staves, stepped forward into the centre of the open space, in order to have the full benefit of the moonlight; the thieves in the meantime laughing, and crying to their comrade, 'Miller! beware thy toll-dish.' The Miller, on

the other hand, holding his quarter-staff by the middle, and making it flourish round his head, exclaimed boastfully, 'Come on, churl, an thou darest: thou shalt feel the strength of a miller's thumb!'

'If thou be'st a miller,' answered Gurth, undauntedly, making his weapon play around his head with equal dexterity, 'thou art doubly a thief, and I, as a true man, bid thee defiance.'

So saying, the two champions closed together, and for a few minutes they displayed great equality in strength, courage, and skill, while from the continual clatter of their weapons, a person at a distance might have supposed that there were at least six persons engaged on each side.

Long they fought equally, until the Miller began to lose temper at finding himself so stoutly opposed, and at hearing the laughter of his companions, who enjoyed his vexation. This was not a state of mind favourable to the noble game of quarter-staff; and it gave Gurth, whose temper was steady, though surly, the opportunity of acquiring a decided advantage.

The Miller pressed furiously forward, dealing blows with either end of his weapon alternately, and striving to come to half-staff distance, while Gurth defended himself against the attack, keeping his hands about a yard asunder, and covering himself by shifting his weapon with great celerity, so as to protect his head and body. Thus did he maintain the defensive, making his eye, foot and hand keep true time, until, observing his antagonist to lose wind, he darted the staff at his face with his left

hand; and as the Miller endeavoured to parry the thrust, he slid his right hand down to his left, and with the full swing of the weapon struck his opponent on the left side of the head, who instantly measured his length upon the green-sward.

'Well and yeomanly done!' shouted the robbers; 'fair play and Old England for ever! The Saxon hath saved both his purse and his hide, and the Miller has met his match.'

'Thou mayst go thy ways my friend,' said the Captain to Gurth. 'Take heed, however; remember thou hast refused to tell thy name—ask not after ours, nor endeavour to discover who or what we are; for, if thou makest such an attempt, thou wilt come by worse fortune than has yet befallen thee.'

Two of the outlaws, taking up their quarter-staves and desiring Gurth to follow close in the rear, walked roundly forward along a by-path, until they arrived on the open heath, when they stopped. 'We go with you no further,' said they; 'it were not sage that we should do so.—Remember the warning you have received—keep secret what has this night befallen you, and you will have no room to repent it—neglect what is now told you, and the Tower of London shall not protect you.'

'Good night to you, kind sirs,' said Gurth; 'I shall remember your orders, and trust that there is no offence in wishing you a safer and an honester trade.'

CHAPTER VIII

The second morning of the tournament arose in unclouded splendour; and ere the sun was much above the horizon the marshals appeared on the field, with the heralds, for the purpose of receiving the names of the knights who intended to joust. According to due formality, the Disinherited Knight was to be considered as leader of the one body, while Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had been rated as having done second best in the preceding day, was named as first champion of the other band.

Athelstane had arrayed his tall and strong person in armour, in order to take his place among the combatants; and, considerably to the surprise of Cedric, had chosen to enlist himself on the part of the Knight Templar.

His best, if not his only reason, for adhering to the party of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Athelstane had the prudence to keep to himself. Though his apathy of disposition prevented his taking any means to recommend himself to the Lady Rowena, he was nevertheless by no means insensible to her charms, and considered his union with her as a matter already fixed beyond doubt by the assent of Cedric and her other friends. It had therefore been with smothered displeasure that the proud though indolent Lord of Coningsburgh beheld the victor of the preceding day select Rowena as the object of that honour which it became his privilege to confer. In order to punish

him for a preference which seemed to interfere with his own suit, Athelstane, confident of his strength, and to whom his flatterers, at least, ascribed great skill in arms, had determined not only to deprive the Disinherited Knight of his powerful succour, but, if an opportunity should occur, to make him feel the weight of his battle-axe.

De Bracy, and other knights attached to Prince John, in obedience to a hint from him, had joined the party of the challengers, John being desirous to secure, if possible, the victory to that side. On the other hand, many other knights, both English and Norman, natives and strangers, took part against the challengers, the more readily that the opposite band was to be led by so distinguished a champion as the Disinherited Knight had approved himself.

As soon as Prince John observed that the destined Queen of the day had arrived upon the field, assuming that air of courtesy which sat well upon him when he was pleased to exhibit it, he rode forward to meet her, doffed his bonnet, and alighting from his horse, assisted the Lady Rowena from her saddle, while his followers uncovered at the same time, and one of the most distinguished dismounted to hold her palfrey.

'It is thus,' said Prince John, 'that we set the dutiful example of loyalty to the Queen of Love and Beauty, and are ourselves her guide to the throne which she must this day occupy.—Ladies,' he said, 'attend your Queen, as you wish in your turn to be distinguished by like honours.'

So saying, the Prince marshalled Rowena to the seat

of honour opposite his own, while the fairest and most distinguished ladies present crowded after her to obtain places as near as possible to their temporary sovereign.

No sooner was Rowena seated, than a burst of music, half-drowned by the shouts of the multitude, greeted her new dignity. Meantime, the sun shone fierce and bright upon the polished arms of the knights of either side, who crowded the opposite extremities of the lists, and held eager conference together concerning the best mode of arranging their line of battle, and supporting the conflict.

The heralds then proclaimed silence until the laws of the tourney should be rehearsed. These were calculated in some degree to abate the dangers of the day; a precaution the more necessary, as the conflict was to be maintained with sharp swords and pointed lances.

The champions were therefore prohibited to thrust with the sword, and were confined to striking. A knight, it was announced, might use a mace or battle-axe at pleasure, but the dagger was a prohibited weapon. A knight unhorsed might renew the fight on foot with any other on the opposite side in the same predicament; but mounted horsemen were in that case forbidden to assail him. When any knight could force his antagonist to the extremity of the lists, so as to touch the palisade with his person or arms, such opponent was obliged to yield himself vanquished, and his armour and horse were placed at the disposal of the conqueror. A knight thus overcome was not permitted to take further share in the combat. If any combatant was struck down, and unable to recover his feet, his squire or page might enter the lists, and drag

his master out of the press; but in that case the knight was adjudged vanquished, and his arms and horse declared forfeited. The combat was to cease as soon as Prince John should throw down his leading staff, or truncheon; another precaution usually taken to prevent the unnecessary effusion of blood by the too long endurance of a sport so desperate. Any knight breaking the rules of the tournament, or otherwise transgressing the rules of honourable chivalry, was liable to be stript of his arms, and, having his shield reversed, to be placed in that posture astride upon the bars of the palisade, and exposed to public derision, in punishment of his unknightly conduct. Having announced these precautions, the heralds concluded with an exhortation to each good knight to do his duty, and to merit favour from the Queen of Beauty and of Love.

This proclamation having been made, the heralds withdrew to their stations. The knights, entering at either end of the lists in long procession, arrranged themselves in a double file, precisely opposite to each other, the leader of each party being in the centre of the foremost rank,—a post which he did not occupy until each had carefully arranged the ranks of his party, and stationed every one in his place.

It was a goodly, and at the same time an anxious sight, to behold so many gallant champions, mounted bravely and armed richly, stand ready prepared for an encounter so formidable, seated on their war-saddles like so many pillars of iron, and awaiting the signal of encounter with the same ardour as their generous steeds, which, by neigh-

ing and pawing the ground, gave signal of their impatience.

As yet the knights held their long lances upright, their bright points glancing to the sun, and the streamers with which they were decorated fluttering over the plumage of their helmets. Thus they remained while the marshals of the field surveyed their ranks with the utmost exactness, lest either party had more or fewer than the appointed number. The tale was found exactly complete. The marshals then withdrew from the lists, and William de Wyvil, with a voice of thunder, pronounced the signal words,—*Laissez aller!* The trumpets sounded as he spoke—the spears of the champions were at once lowered and placed in the rests—the spurs were dashed into the flanks of the horses, and the two foremost ranks of either party rushed upon each other in full gallop, and met in the middle of the lists with a shock, the sound of which was heard at a mile's distance. The rear rank of each party advanced at a slower pace to sustain the defeat, and follow up the success of the victors of their party.

The consequences of the encounter were not instantly seen, for the dust raised by the trampling of so many steeds darkened the air, and it was a minute before the anxious spectators could see the fate of the encounter. When the fight became visible, half the knights on each side were dismounted, some by the dexterity of their adversary's lance,—some by the superior weight and strength of opponents, which had borne down both horse and man,—some lay stretched on earth as if never more to rise,—some had already gained their feet, and were

closing hand to hand with those of their antagonists who were in the same predicament,—and several on both sides, who had received wounds by which they were disabled, were stopping their blood with their scarfs, and endeavouring to extricate themselves from the tumult. The mounted knights, whose lances had been almost all broken by the fury of the encounter, were now closely engaged with their swords, shouting their war-cries, and exchanging buffets, as if honour and life depended on the issue of the combat.

The tumult was presently increased by the advance of the second rank on either side, which, acting as a reserve, now rushed on to aid their companions. The followers of Brian de Bois-Guilbert shouted—'*Ha! Beau-seant! Beau-seant!*—For the Temple—For the Temple!' The opposite party shouted in answer—'*Desdichado! Desdichado!*'—which watchword they took from the motto upon their leader's shield.

The champions thus encountering each other with the utmost fury, and with alternate success, the tide of battle seemed to flow now toward the southern, now toward the northern extremity of the lists, as the one or the other party prevailed. Meantime the clang of the blows, and the shouts of the combatants, mixed fearfully with the sound of the trumpets, and drowned the groans of those who fell, and lay rolling defenceless beneath the feet of the horses. The splendid armour of the combatants was now defaced with dust and blood, and gave way at every stroke of the sword and battle-axe. The gay plumage, shorn from the crests, drifted upon the breeze like snow-

flakes. All that was beautiful and graceful in the martial array had disappeared, and what was now visible was only calculated to awake terror or compassion.

Yet such is the force of habit, that not only the vulgar spectators, who are naturally attracted by sights of horror, but even the ladies of distinction, who crowded the galleries, saw the conflict with a thrilling interest certainly, but without a wish to withdraw their eyes from a sight so terrible. Here and there, indeed, a fair cheek might turn pale, or a faint scream might be heard, as a lover, a brother, or a husband, was struck from his horse. But, in general, the ladies around encouraged the combatants not only by clapping their hands and waving their veils and kerchiefs, but even by exclaiming, 'Brave lance! Good sword!' when any successful thrust or blow took place under their observation.

Such being the interest taken by the fair sex in this bloody game, that of the men is the more easily understood. It showed itself in loud acclamations upon every change of fortune, while all eyes were so riveted on the lists, that the spectators seemed as if they themselves had dealt and received the blows which were there so freely bestowed. And between every pause was heard the voice of the heralds, exclaiming, 'Fight on, brave knights! Man dies, but glory lives!—Fight on—death is better than defeat!—Fight on, brave Knights! –for bright eyes behold your deeds!'

Amid the varied fortunes of the combat, the eyes of all endeavoured to discover the leaders of each band, who, mingling in the thick of the fight, encouraged their com-

panions both by voice and example. Both displayed great feats of gallantry, nor did either Bois-Guilbert or the Disinherited Knight find in the ranks opposed to them a champion who could be termed their unquestioned match. They repeatedly endeavoured to single out each other, spurred by mutual animosity, and aware that the fall of either leader might be considered as decisive of victory. Such, however, was the crowd and confusion, that, during the earlier part of the conflict, their efforts to meet were unavailing, and they were repeatedly separated by the eagerness of their followers, each of whom was anxious to win honour, by measuring his strength against the leader of the opposite party.

But when the field became thin by the numbers on either side who had yielded themselves vanquished, had been compelled to the extremity of the lists, or been otherwise rendered incapable of continuing the strife, the Templar and the Disinherited Knight at length encountered hand to hand, with all the fury that mortal animosity, joined to rivalry of honour, could inspire. Such was the address of each in parrying and striking, that the spectators broke forth into a unanimous and involuntary shout, expressive of their delight and admiration.

But at this moment the party of the Disinherited Knight had the worst; the gigantic arm of Front-de-Bœuf on the one flank, and the ponderous strength of Athelstane on the other, bearing down and dispersing those immediately exposed to them. Finding themselves freed from their immediate antagonists, it seems to have occurred to both these knights at the same instant, that

they would render the most decisive advantage to their party, by aiding the Templar in his contest with his rival. Turning their horses, therefore, at the same moment, the Norman spurred against the Disinherited Knight on the one side, and the Saxon on the other. It was utterly impossible that the object of this unequal and unexpected assault could have sustained it, had he not been warned by a general cry from the spectators, who could not but take interest in one exposed to such disadvantage.

'Beware! beware! Sir Disinherited!' was shouted so universally, that the knight became aware of his danger, and, striking a full blow at the Templar, he reined back his steed in the same moment, so as to escape the charge of Athelstane and Front-de-Bœuf. These knights, therefore, their aim being thus eluded, rushed from opposite sides betwixt the object of their attack and the Templar, almost running their horses against each other ere they could stop their career. Recovering their horses, however, and wheeling them round, the whole three pursued their united purpose of bearing to the earth the Disinherited Knight.

Nothing could have saved him, except the remarkable strength and activity of the noble horse which he had won on the preceding day.

This stood him in the more stead, as the horse of Bois-Guilbert was wounded, and those of Front-de-Bœuf and Athelstane were both tired with the weight of their gigantic masters, clad in complete armour, and with the preceding exertions of the day. The masterly horsemanship of the Disinherited Knight, and the activity of the noble

animal which he mounted, enabled him for a few minutes to keep at sword's point his three antagonists, turning and wheeling with the agility of a hawk upon the wing, keeping his enemies as far separate as he could, and rushing now against the one, now against the other, dealing sweeping blows with his sword, without waiting to receive those which were aimed at him in return.

But although the lists rang with the applauses of his dexterity, it was evident that he must at last be overpowered; and the nobles around Prince John implored him with one voice to throw down his warder, and to save so brave a knight from the disgrace of being overcome by odds.

'Not I, by the light of Heaven!' answered Prince John; 'this same springal, who conceals his name, and despises our proffered hospitality, has already gained one prize, and may now afford to let others have their turn.' As he spoke thus, an unexpected incident changed the fortune of the day.

There was among the ranks of the Disinherited Knight a champion in black armour, mounted on a black horse, large of size, tall, and to all appearance powerful and strong, like the rider by whom he was mounted. This knight, who bore on his shield no device of any kind, had hitherto evinced very little interest in the event of the fight, beating off with seeming ease those combatants who attacked him, but neither pursuing his advantages, nor himself assailing any one. In short, he had hitherto acted the part rather of a spectator than of a party in the tournament, a circumstance which procured him among

the spectators the name of *Le Noir Faineant*, or the Black Sluggard.

At once this knight seemed to throw aside his apathy, when he discovered the leader of his party so hard bestead; for, setting spurs to his horse, which was quite fresh, he came to his assistance like a thunderbolt, exclaiming in a voice like a trumpet-call, '*Desdichado*, to the rescue!' It was high time; for, while the Disinherited Knight was pressing upon the Templar, Front-de-Bœuf had got nigh to him with his uplifted sword; but, ere the blow could descend, the Sable Knight dealt a stroke on the head, which, glancing from the polished helmet, lighted with violence scarcely abated on the *chamfron* of the steed, and Front-de-Bœuf rolled on the ground, both horse and man equally stunned by the fury of the blow. *Le Noir Faineant* then turned his horse upon Athelstane of Coningsburgh; and his own sword having been broken in his encounter with Front-de-Bœuf, he wrenched from the hand of the bulky Saxon the battle-axe which he wielded, and, like one familiar with the use of the weapon, bestowed him such a blow upon the crest, that Athelstane also lay senseless on the field. Having achieved this double feat, for which he was the more highly applauded that it was totally unexpected from him, the knight seemed to resume the sluggishness of his character, returning calmly to the northern extremity of the lists, leaving his leader to cope as he best could with Brian de Bois-Guilbert. This was no longer matter of so much difficulty as formerly. The Templar's horse had bled much, and gave way under the shock of the Disinherited Knight's charge. Brian de

Bois-Guilbert rolled on the field, encumbered with the stirrup, from which he was unable to draw his foot. His antagonist sprung from horseback, waved his fatal sword over the head of his adversary, and commanded him to yield himself; when Prince John, more moved by the Templar's dangerous situation than he had been by that of his rival, saved him the mortification of confessing himself vanquished, by casting down his warder, and putting an end to the conflict.

It was, indeed, only the relics and embers of the fight which continued to burn; for of the few knights who still continued in the lists, the greater part had, by tacit consent, forborne the conflict for some time, leaving it to be determined by the strife of the leaders.

The squires, who had found it a matter of danger and difficulty to attend their masters during the engagement, now thronged into the lists to pay their dutiful attendance to the wounded, who were removed with the utmost care and attention to the neighbouring pavilions, or to the quarters prepared for them in the adjoining village.

Thus ended the memorable field of Ashby-de-la-Zouche, one of the most gallantly contested tournaments of that age; for although only four knights, including one who was smothered by the heat of his armour, had died upon the field, yet upwards of thirty were desperately wounded, four or five of whom never recovered. Several more were disabled for life; and those who escaped best, carried the marks of the conflict to the grave with them. Hence it is always mentioned in the old records, as the Gentle and Joyous Passage of Arms of Ashby.

It being now the duty of Prince John to name the knight who had done best, he determined that the honour of the day remained with the knight whom the popular voice had termed *Le Noir Faineant*. It was pointed out to the Prince, in impeachment of this decree, that the victory had been in fact won by the Disinherited Knight, who, in the course of the day, had overcome six champions with his own hand, and who had finally unhorsed and struck down the leader of the opposite party. But Prince John adhered to his own opinion, on the ground that the Disinherited Knight and his party had lost the day but for the powerful assistance of the Knight of the Black Armour, to whom, therefore, he persisted in awarding the prize.

To the surprise of all present, however, the knight thus preferred was nowhere to be found. He had left the lists immediately when the conflict ceased, and had been observed by some spectators to move down one of the forest glades with the same slow pace and listless and indifferent manner which had procured him the epithet of the Black Sluggard. After he had been summoned twice by sound of trumpet and proclamation of the heralds, it became necessary to name another to receive the honours which had been assigned to him. Prince John had now no further excuse for resisting the claim of the Disinherited Knight, who, he named the champion of the day.

Through a field slippery with blood, and encumbered with broken armour and the bodies of slain and wounded horses, the marshals of the lists again conducted the victor to the foot of Prince John's throne.

'Disinherited Knight,' said Prince John, 'since by that title only you will consent to be known to us, we a second time award to you the honours of this tournament, and announce to you your right to claim and receive from the hands of the Queen of Love and Beauty, the Chaplet of Honour which your valour has justly deserved.' The Knight bowed low and gracefully, but returned no answer.

While the trumpets sounded, while the heralds strained their voices in proclaiming honour to the brave and glory to the victor, while ladies waved their silken kerchiefs and embroidered veils, and while all ranks joined in a clamorous shout of exaltation, the marshals conducted the Disinherited Knight across the lists to the foot of that throne of honour which was occupied by Lady Rowena.

On the lower step of this throne the champion was made to kneel down. Indeed his whole action since the fight had ended, seemed rather to have been upon the impulse of those around him than from his own free will; and it was observed that he tottered as they guided him the second time across the lists. Rowena, descending from her station with a graceful and dignified step, was about to place the chaplet which she held in her hand upon the helmet of the champion, when the marshals exclaimed with one voice, 'It must not be thus—his head must be bare.' The knight muttered faintly, a few words, which were lost in the hollow of his helmet, but their purport seemed to be a desire that his casque might not be removed.

Whether from love or from curiosity, the marshals

paid no attention to his expressions of reluctance, but unhelmeted him by cutting the laces of his casque, and undoing the fastening of his gorget. When the helmet was removed, the well-formed, yet sun-burnt features of a young man of twenty-five were seen, amidst a profusion of short fair hair. His countenance was as pale as death, and marked in one or two places with streaks of blood.

Rowena had no sooner beheld him than she uttered a faint shriek but at once summoning up the energy of her disposition, and compelling herself, as it were, to proceed, while her frame yet trembled with the violence of sudden emotion, she placed upon the drooping head of the victor the splendid chaplet which was the destined reward of the day, and pronounced, in a clear and distinct tone, these words: 'I bestow on thee this chaplet, Sir Knight, as the meed of valour assigned to this day's victor': Here she paused a moment, and then firmly added, 'And upon brows more worthy could a wreath of chivalry never be placed!'

The knight stooped his head and kissed the hand of the lovely Sovereign by whom his valour had been rewarded, and then sinking farther forward, lay prostrate at her feet.

There was a general consternation. Cedric, who had been struck mute by the sudden appearance of his banished son, now rushed forward, as if to separate him from Rowena. But this had been already accomplishd by the marshals of the field, who, guessing the cause of Ivanhoe's swoon, had hastened to undo his armour, and found that the head of a lance had penetrated his breastplate, and inflicted a wound in his side.

CHAPTER IX

The name of Ivanhoe was no sooner pronounced than it flew from mouth to mouth, and it was not long ere it reached the ears of the Prince, whose brow darkened as he heard the news.

Looking around him, however, with an air of scorn, 'My lords,' said he, 'methinks that I felt the presence of my brother's minion, even when I least guessed whom yonder suit of armour enclosed.'

'Front-de-Bœuf must prepare to restore his fief of Ivanhoe,' said De Bracy.

'Ay,' answered Waldemar Fitzurse, 'this gallant is likely to reclaim the castle and manor which Richard assigned to him, and which your Highness's generosity has since given to Front-de-Bœuf.

'Front-de-Bœuf,' replied John, 'is a man more willing to swallow three manors such as Ivanhoe, than to disgorge one of them. For the rest, sirs, I hope none here will deny my right to confer the fiefs of the crown upon the faithful followers who are around me.'

Prince John had proceeded thus far, and was about to give the signal for retiring from the lists, when a small billet was put into his hand.

'From whence?' said Prince John, looking at the person by whom it was delivered.

'From foreign parts, my lord, but from whence I know not,' replied his attendant. 'A Frenchman brought it

hither, who said he had ridden night and a day to put it into the hands of your highness.'

The Prince looked narrowly at the superscription, and then at the seal, which bore the impression of three fleur-de-lis. He then opened the billet with apparent agitation, which visibly and greatly increased when he had perused the contents.

'Take heed to yourself, for the Devil is unchained!'

The Prince turned as pale as death. Recovering from the first effects of his surprise, he took Waldemar Fitzurse and De Bracy aside, and put the billet into their hands successively. 'It means,' he added, in a faltering voice, 'that my brother Richard has obtained his freedom.'

'This may be a false alarm,' said De Bracy.

'It is France's own hand and seal,' replied Prince John.

'It is time, then,' said Fitzurse, 'to draw our party to a head. A few days later, and it will be indeed too late, Your highness must break short this present mummery.'

'The yeomen and commons,' said De Bracy, 'must not be dismissed discontented for lack of their share in the sports.'

'The day,' said Waldemar, 'is not yet very far spent—let the archers shoot a few rounds at the target, and the prize be adjudged. This will be an abundant fulfulment of the Prince's promises.'

'I thank thee, Waldemar,' said the Prince, 'thou remindest me, too, that I have a debt to pay to that insolent peasant who yesterday insulted our person. Our banquet also shall go forward to-night as we proposed, were this my last hour of power, it should be an hour

sacred to revenge and to pleasure.'

The sound of the trumpets soon recalled those spectators who had begun to leave the field; and proclamation was made that Prince John, suddenly called away by high and peremptory public duties, held himself obliged to discontinue the entertainments of to-morrow's festival: Nevertheless, that, unwilling so many good yeomen should depart without a trial of skill, he was pleased to appoint them, before leaving the ground, presently to execute the competition of archery intended for the morrow. To the best archer a prize to be awarded, being a bugle-horn, mounted with silver, and a silken baldric richly ornamented with a medallion of St. Hubert, the patron of silvan sport.

The list of competitors for these prizes amounted to eight. Prince John stepped from his royal seat to view more nearly the persons of these chosen yeomen, several of whom wore the royal livery. Having satisfied his curiosity by this investigaton, he looked for the object of his resentment, whom he observed standing on the same spot, and with the same composed countenance which he had exhibited upon the preceding day.

'Fellow,' said Prince John, 'I guessed by thy insolent babble thou wert no true lover of the long-bow, and I see thou darest not adventure thy skill among such merrymen as stand yonder.'

'Under favour, sir,' replied the yeoman, 'I have another reason for refraining to shoot.'

'And what is thy other reason?' said Prince John.

'Because,' replied the woodsman, 'I know not if these

yeomen and I are used to shoot at the same marks; and because, moreover, I know not how your Grace might relish the winning of a third prize by one who has unwittingly fallen under your displeasure.'

Prince John coloured as he put the question, 'What is thy name, yeoman?'

'Locksley,' answered the yeoman.

'Then, Locksley,' said Prince John, 'thou shalt shoot in thy turn, when these yeomen have displayed their skill. If thou carriest the prize, I will add to it twenty nobles; but, if thou losest it, thou shalt be stript of thy Lincoln green, and scourged out of the lists with bowstrings, for a wordy and insolent braggart.'

'This is no fair chance you put on me, proud Prince,' said the yeoman, 'to compel me to peril myself against the best archers of Leicester and Staffordshire, under the penalty of infamy if they should overshoot me. Nevertheless, I will obey your pleasure.'

'Look to him close, men-at-arms,' said Prince John, 'his heart is sinking; I am jealous lest he attempt to escape the trial.'

A target was placed at the upper end of the southern avenue which led to the lists.

One by one the archers, stepping forward, delivered their shafts yeomanlike and bravely. Of twenty-four arrows, shot in succession, ten were fixed in the target, and the others ranged so near it that, considering the distance of the mark, it was accounted good archery. Of the ten shafts which hit the target, two within the inner ring were shot by Hubert, a forester in the ser-

vice of Malvoisin, who was accordingly, pronounced victorious.

'Now, Locksley,' said Prince John to the bold yeoman with a bitter smile, 'wilt thou try conclusions with Hubert, or wilt thou yield up bow, baldric, and quiver to the Provost of the sports?'

'Sith it be no better,' said Locksley, 'I am content to try my fortune; on condition that, when I have shot two shafts at yonder mark of Hubert's, he shall be bound to shoot one at which I shall propose.'

'That is but fair,' answered Prince John, 'and it shall not be refused thee.—If thou dost beat this braggart, Hubert, I will fill the bugle with silverpennies for thee.'

'A man can do but his best,' answered Hubert; 'but my grandsire drew a good long bow at Hastings, and I trust not to dishonour his memory.'

The former target was now removed, and a fresh one of the same size placed in its room. Hubert, who, as victor in the first trial of skill, had the right to shoot first, took his aim with great deliberation. At length he made a step forward, and raising the bow at full stretch of his left arm, he drew his bowstring to his ear. The arrow whistled through the air, and lighted within the inner ring of the target, but not exactly in the centre.

'You have not allowed for the wind, Hubert,' said his antagonist, bending his bow.

So saying, and without showing the least anxiety to pause upon his aim, Locksley stept to the appointed station, and shot his arrow as carelessly in appearance as if he had not even looked at the mark. He was speaking

almost at the instant that the shaft left the bowstring, yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer to the white spot which marked the centre than that of Hubert.

'By the light of heaven!' said Prince John to Hubert, 'an thou suffer that runagate knave to overcome thee, thou art worthy of the gallows!'

Hubert had but one set speech for all occasions. 'An your highness were to hang me,' he said, 'a man can but do his best. Nevertheless, my grandsire drew a good bow——'

'The foul fiend on thy grandsire and all his generation!' interrupted John; 'shoot, knave, and shoot thy best, or it shall be worse for thee!'

Thus exhorted, Hubert resumed his place, and not neglecting the caution which he had received from his adversary, he made the necessary allowance for a very light air of wind, which had just arisen, and shot so successfully that his arrrow alighted in the very centre of the target.

'A Hubert! a Hubert!' shouted the populace, more interested in a known person than in a stranger. 'In the clout!—in the clout!—a Hubert for ever!'

'Thou canst not mend that shot, Locksley,' said the Prince, with an insulting smile.

'I will notch his shaft for him, however,' replied Locksley.

And letting fly his arrow with a little more precaution than before, it lighted right upon that of his competitor, which it split to shivers. The people who had stood around were so astonished at his wonderful dexterity,

The Marshals unhelmed him by cutting the laces of his casque.

Locksley stepped into the appointed station.

that they could not even give vent to their surprise in their usual clamour. 'This must be the devil, and no man of flesh and blood,' whispered the yeomen to each other; 'such archery was never seen since a bow was first bent in Britain.'

'And now,' said Locksley, 'I will crave your Grace's permission to plant a mark as is used in the North Country.'

He then turned to leave the lists. 'Let your guards attend me,' he said, 'if you please—I go but to cut a rod from the next willow bush.'

Prince John made a signal that some attendants should follow him in case of his escape: but the cry of 'Shame! shame!' which burst from the multitude, induced him to alter his ungenerous purpose.

Locksley returned almost instantly with a willow wand about six feet in length, perfectly straight and rather thicker than a man's thumb. He began to peel this with great composure, observing at the same time, that to ask a good woodsman to shoot at a target so broad as had hitherto been used, was to put shame upon his skill. 'A child of seven years old,' he said, 'might hit yonder target with a headless shaft; but,' added he, walking deliberately to the other end of the lists, and sticking the willow wand upright in the ground, 'he that hits that rod at five-score yards, I call him an archer.'

'My grandsire,' said Hubert, 'drew a good bow at the battle of Hastings, and never shot at a such mark in his life—and neither will I. If this yeoman can cleave that rod, I give him the bucklers—or rather, I yield to the

devil that is in his jerkin, and not to any human skill; a man can but do his best, and I will not shoot where I am sure to miss.'

'Cowardly dog!' said Prince John.—'Sirrah Locksley, do thou shoot: but, if thou hittest such a mark, I will say thou art the first man ever did so.'

'I will do my best, as Hubert says,' answered Locksley; 'no man can do more.'

So saying, he again bent his bow, but on the present occasion looked with attention to his weapon, and changed the string, which he thought was no longer truly round, having been a little frayed by the two former shots. He then took his aim with some deliberaton, and the multitude awaited the event in breathless silence. The archer vindicated their opinion; his arrow slit the willow rod against which it was aimed. A jubilee of acclamations followed; and even Prince John, in admiration of Locksley's skill, lost for an instant his dislike to his person. 'These twenty nobles,' he said, 'which, with the bugle, thou hast fairly won, are thine own; we will make them fifty, if thou wilt take livery and service with us as a yeoman of our body guard, and be near to our person.'

'Pardon me, noble Prince,' said Locksley; 'but I have vowed that, if ever I take service, it should be with your royal brother King Richard. These twenty nobles I leave to Hubert, who has this day drawn as brave a bow as his grandsire did at Hastings. Had his modesty not refused the trial, he would have hit the wand as well as I.'

CHAPTER X

Le Noir Faineant had left the lists abruptly when the victory was achieved; and when he was called upon to receive the reward of his valour, he was nowhere to be found. In the meantime, while summoned by heralds and by trumpets, the knight was holding his course northward, avoiding all frequented paths, and taking the shortest road through the woodlands.

Yet his purpose was baffled by the devious paths through which he rode, so that when evening closed upon him, he only found himself on the frontiers of the West Riding of Yorkshire. After having in vain endeavoured to select the most beaten path, in hopes it might lead to the cottage of some herdsman, and having repeatedly found himself totally unable to determine on a choice, the knight resolved to trust to the sagacity of his horse. The path which the animal adopted rather turned off from the course pursued by the knight during the day; but as the horse seemed confident in its choice, the rider abandoned himself to its discretion.

He was justified by the event; for the footpath soon after appeared a little wider and more worn, and the tinkle of a small bell gave the knight to understand that he was in the vicinity of some chapel or hermitage. He soon reached an open plat of turf, on the opposite side of which a rock, rising abruptly from a gently sloping plain, offered its grey and weather-beaten front to the

traveller. At a little distance on the right hand, a fountain of the purest water trickled out of the rock, and was received in a hollow stone, which labour had formed into a rustic basin.

Beside this fountain were the ruins of a very small chapel, of which the roof had partly fallen in. A belfry rose above the porch on four small pillars, within which hung the green and weather-beaten bell, the feeble sounds of which had been some time before heard by the Black Knight.

Accordingly, the knight leaped from his horse and assailed the door of the hermitage with the butt of his lance.

It was some time before he obtained any answer, and the reply, when made, was unpropitious.

'Pass on, whosoever thou art,' was the answer given by a deep hoarse voice from within the hut, 'and disturb not the servant of God and St. Dunstan in his evening devotions.'

'Worthy father,' answered the knight, 'here is a poor wanderer bewildered in these woods, who gives thee the opportunity of exercising thy charity and hospitality.'

'And I pray you, good Christian brother,' replied the anchorite, 'to disturb me no more. You have already interrupted one *pater*, two *aves*, and a *credo*.'

'The road—the road!' vociferated the knight, 'give me directions for the road, if I am to expect no more from thee.'

'The road,' replied the hermit, 'is easy to hit. The path from the wood leads to a morass, and from thence to a

ford, which, as the rains have abated, may now be passable. When thou hast crossed the ford, thou wilt take care of thy footing up the left bank, as it is somewhat precipitous.'

'A broken path—a precipice—a ford, and a morass!' said the knight, interrupting him,—'Sir Hermit, if you were the holiest that ever wore beard or told bead, you shall scarce prevail on me to hold this road to-night. Either open the door quickly, or, by the rod, I will beat it down and make entry for myself.'

The door accordingly was opened; and the hermit, a large, strong-built man, in his sackcloth gown and hood, girt with a rope of rushes, stood before the knight. He had in one hand a lighted torch, or link, and in the other a baton of crab-tree, so thick and heavy that it might well be termed a club. Two large shaggy dogs, half greyhound half mastiff, stood ready to rush upon the traveller as soon as the door should be opened. But when the torch glanced upon the lofty crest and golden spurs of the knight who stood without, the hermit, altering probably his original intentions, repressed the rage of his auxiliaries, and invited the knight to enter his hut, making excuse for his unwillingness to open his lodge after sunset, by alleging the multitude of robbers and outlaws who were abroad.

Having said this, he fixed his torch in a twisted branch of iron which served for a candlestick; and placing the oaken trivet before the embers of the fire, he placed a stool upon one side of the table, and beckoned to the knight to do the same upon the other.

They sat down, and gazed with great gravity at each

other, each thinking in his heart that he had seldom seen a stronger or more athletic figure than was placed opposite to him.

'Reverend hermit,' said the knight, after looking long and fixedly at his host, 'I would pray to know where I am to put my horse?—what I can have for supper?—where I am to take up my couch for the night?'

'Your stable,' said he, 'is there—your bed there; and,' reaching down a platter with two handfuls of parched pease upon it, he added, 'your supper is here.'

The knight returned him thanks for his courtesy; and both resumed their seats by the table, whereon stood the trencher of pease. The hermit, after a long grace, which had once been Latin, but of which original language few traces remained, set example to his guest by modestly putting into a very large mouth three or four dried pease.

The knight, in order to follow so laudable an example, laid aside his helmet, his corselet, and the greater part of his armour, and showed to the hermit a head thick-curled with yellow hair, high features, blue eyes, remarkably bright and sparkling, a mouth well formed, having an upper lip clothed with mustaches darker than his hair, and bearing altogether the look of a bold, daring, and enterprising man, with which his strong form well corresponded.

After he had with great difficulty accomplished the mastication of a mouthful of the dried pease, he found it absolutely necessary to request his pious entertainer to furnish him with some liquor; who replied to his request by placing before him a large can of the purest water from

the fountain.

'It is from the well of St. Dunstan,' said he. And applying his black beard to the pitcher, he took a draught much more moderate in quantity than his encomium seemed to warrant.

'It seems to me, reverend father,' said the knight, 'that the small morsels which you eat, together with this holy, but somewhat thin beverage, have thriven with you marvellously. You appear a man more fit to win the ram at a wrestling match, or the ring at a bout of quarter-staff, or the bucklers at a sword-play, than to linger out your time in this desolate wilderness.'

'Sir Knight,' answered the hermit, 'your thoughts, like those of the ignorant laity, are according to the flesh. It has pleased Our Lady and my patron saint to bless the pittance to which I restrain myself.—And now, valiant knight, may I pray ye for the name of my honourable guest?'

'Truly,' said the knight, 'men call me in these parts the Black Knight, and many, sir, add to it the epithet of Sluggard, whereby I am no way ambitious to be distinguished.'

'I see, Sir Sluggish Knight,' said the hermit, 'that thou are a man of prudence and of counsel; and moreover, I see that my poor monastic fare likes thee not; and now I bethink me that, when the charitable keeper of this forest-walk left these dogs for my protection, he left me also some food, which being unfit for my use, the very recollection of it had escaped me amid my more weighty meditations.'

'I dare be sworn he did so,' said the knight; 'I was

convinced that there was better food in the cell, Holy Clerk, since you first doffed your cowl.—Let us see the keeper's bounty, therefore, without delay.'

The hermit cast a wistful look upon the knight, in which there was a sort of comic expression of hesitation, as if uncertain how far he should act prudently in trusting his guest.

Then he went to the farther side of the hut, and opened a hutch, which was concealed with great care and some ingenuity. Out of the recesses of a dark closet, into which this aperture gave admittance, he brought a large pasty, baked in a pewter platter of unusual dimensions. This mighty dish he placed before his guest, who using his poniard to cut it open, lost no time in making himself acquainted with its contents.

The hermit made but a poor figure while gazing on the diminution of the pasty, on which his guest was making desperate inroads.

'I have been in Palestine, Sir Clerk,' said the knight, stopping short of a sudden, 'and I bethink me it is a custom that every host who entertains a guest shall assure him of the wholesomeness of his food, by partaking of it along with him. I will be highly bound to you, would you comply with this Eastern custom.'

'To ease your unnecessary scruples, Sir Knight, I will for once depart from my rule,' replied the hermit. And, as there were no forks in those days, his clutches were instantly in the bowels of the pasty.

The ice of ceremony being once broken, 'Holy Clerk,' said the knight, when his hunger was appeased, 'I would

gage my good horse yonder against a zecchin, that that same honest keeper has left thee a stoup of wine, or some such trifle, by way of ally to this noble pasty.'

The hermit replied by a grin: and returning to the hutch, he produced a leathern bottle, which might contain about four quarts. He also brought forth two large drinking cups, made out of the horn of the urus, and hooped with silver. Then, filling both cups, and saying, in the Saxon fashion, '*Waes hael*, Sir Sluggish Knight!' he emptied his own at a draught.

'*Drinc hael*, Holy Clerk!' answered the warrior, and did his host reason in a similar brimmer.

'By my faith,' said the knight, 'thou makest me more curious than ever! Thou art the most mysterious hermit I ever met; and I will know more of thee ere we part.'

'Sir Sluggish Knight, I drink to thee,' said the hermit; 'respecting thy valour much, but deeming wondrous slightly at thy discreton. If thou wilt take equal arms with me, I will give thee, in all friendship and brotherly love, such sufficing penance and complete absolution that thou shalt not for the next twelve months sin the sin of excess and curiosity.'

The knight pledged him, and desired him to name his weapons.

'There is none,' replied the hermit, 'from the scissors of Delilah, and the tenpenny nail of Jael, to the scimitar of Goliah, at which I am not a match for thee—But, if I am to make the election, what sayest thou, good friend, to these trinkets?'

Thus speaking, he opened another hutch, and took out

from it a couple of broadswords and bucklers, such as were used by the yeomanry of the period. The knight, who watched his motions, observed that this second place of concealment was furnished with two or three good long-bows, a crossbow, a bundle of bolts for the latter, and half-a-dozen sheaves of arrows for the former. A harp, and other matters of uncanonical appearance, were also visible when this dark recess was opened.

'I promise thee, brother Clerk,' said he, 'I will ask thee no more offensive questions. The contents of that cupboard are an answer to all my inquiries; and I see a weapon there' (here he stooped and took out the harp) 'on which I would more gladly prove my skill with thee than at the sword and buckler.'

'I hope, Sir Knight,' said the hermit, 'thou hast given no good reason for thy surname of Sluggard. I do promise thee I suspect thee grievously. Nevertheless, thou art my guest, and I will not put thy manhood to the proof without thine own free will. Sit thee down, then, and fill thy cup; let us drink, sing, and be merry.'

CHAPTER XI

When Cedric the Saxon saw his son drop down senseless in the lists at Ashby, his first impulse was to order him into the custody and care of his own attendants, but the words choked in his throat. He ordered, however, Oswald to keep an eye upon him, and to convey him to Ashby as soon as the crowd had dispersed.

It was in vain, however, that Cedric's cupbearer looked around for his young master, but he suddenly cast his eye upon a person attired like a squire, in whom he recognised his fellow-servant Gurth. Oswald deemed it his duty to secure Gurth, as a fugitive of whose fate his master was to judge.

Renewing his inquiries concerning the fate of Ivanhoe, the only information which the cupbearer could collect from the bystanders, was that the knight had been placed in a litter belonging to a lady among the spectators, which had immediately transported him out the press.

The Saxon had been under very intense and agonising apprehensions concerning his son. But no sooner was he informed that Ivanhoe was in careful and probably in friendly hands, than the paternal anxiety which had been excited by the dubiety of his fate, gave way anew to the feeling of injured pride and resentment, at what he termed Wilfred's filial disobedience. 'Let him wander his way,' said he. Then, turning to his train, he added—

'To horse, and forward!'

'It is indeed full time,' said the noble Athelstane; 'for, if we ride not the faster, the worthy Abbot Waltheoff's preparations for a rere-supper will be altogether spoiled.'

The travellers had now reached the verge of the wooded country, held dangerous at that time from the number of outlaws. From these rovers, however, Cedric and Athelstane accounted themselves secure, as they had in attendance ten servants, besides Wamba and Gurth, whose aid could not be counted upon, the one being a jester and the other a captive.

As they journeyed on their way, they were alarmed by repeated cries for assistance; and when they rode up to the place from whence they came, they were surprised to find a horse-litter placed upon the ground, beside which sat a young woman, richly dressed in the Jewish fashion, while an old man, whose yellow cap proclaimed him to belong to the same nation, walked up and down with gestures of the deepest despair, and wrung his hands.

When he began to come to himself out of this agony of terror, Isaac of York (for it was our old friend) was at length able to explain that he had hired a body-guard of six men at Ashby, together with mules for carrying the litter of a sick friend. This party had undertaken to escort him as far as Doncaster. They had come thus far in safety; but having received information from a wood-cutter that there was a band of outlaws in the woods, they had not only taken flight, but had carried off with them the horses which bore the litter, and left the Jew and his daughter

without the means either of defence or of retreat. 'Would it but please your valours,' added Isaac, in a tone of deep humiliation, 'to permit the poor Jews to travel under your safeguard?'

'Dog of a Jew!' said Athelstane, whose memory was of that petty kind which stores up trifles of all kinds, but particularly trifling offences, 'dost not remember how thou didst beard us in the gallery at the tilt-yard? Fight or flee or compound with the outlaws, as thou dost list; if they rob only such as thee, I, for mine own share, shall hold them right honest folk.'

Cedric did not assent to the severe proposal of his companion. 'We shall do better,' said he, 'to leave them two of our attendants and two horses to convey them back to the next village. It will diminish our strength but little; and with your good sword, noble Athelstane, and the aid of those who remain, it will be light work for us to face twenty of those runagates.'

Rowena, somewhat alarmed by the mention of outlaws in force and so near them, strongly seconded the proposal of her guardian. 'The man is old and feeble,' she said to her guardian, 'the maiden young and beautiful, their friend sick and in peril of his life. Let them unload two of the sumpter-mules, and put the luggage behind two of the serfs.'

Cedric readily assented to what she proposed, and Athelstane only added the condition that they should travel in the rear of the whole party, where Wamba, he said, might attend them with his shield of boar's brawn.

'I have left my shield in the tilt-yard,' answered the

Jester, 'as has been the fate of many a better knight than myself.'

Athelstane coloured deeply, for such had been his own fate on the last day of the tournament.

By this time the change of baggage was hastily achieved; for the single word 'outlaws' rendered every one sufficiently alert, and the approach of twilight made the sound yet more impressive. Amid the bustle, Gurth was taken from horseback, in the course of which removal he found no difficulty in freeing his arms, and then gliding into the thicket.

The path upon which the party travelled was now so narrow as not to admit, with any sort of convenience, above two riders abreast. Cedric and Athelstane saw the risk of being attacked at this pass; but neither of them having had much practice in war, no better mode of preventing the danger occurred to them than that they should hasten through the defile as fast as possible. Advancing, therefore, without much order, they had just crossed the brook with a part of their followers, when they were assailed in front, flank, and rear at once, with an impetuosity to which it was impossible to offer effectual resistance. Of all the train none escaped except Wamba, who showed upon the occasion much more courage than those who pretended to greater sense.

Yet the valiant Jester, as soon as he found himself safe, hesitated more than once whether he should not turn back and share the captivity of a master to whom he was sincerely attached.

'I have heard men talk of the blessings of freedom,' he

said, 'but I wish any wise man would teach me what use to make of it now that I have it.'

As he pronounced these words aloud, a voice very near him called out in a low and cautious tone, 'Wamba!' and Gurth immediately stood before him.

'What is the matter?' said he eagerly; 'what mean these cries and that clashing of swords?'

'My lord and my lady are prisoners, and Athelstane and Hundibert and Oswald!'

'In the name of God!' said Gurth, 'how came they prisoners?—and to whom?'

'Our master was too ready to fight,' said the Jester; 'and Athelstane was not ready enough, and no other person was ready at all.'

A third person suddenly made his appearance, and commanded them both to halt. From his dress and arms, Wamba would have conjectured him to be one of those outlaws who had just assailed his master; but, besides that he wore no mask, the glittering baldric across his shoulder, with the rich bugle-horn which it supported, as well as the calm and commanding expression of his voice and manner, made him recognise Locksley.

'What is the meaning of all this?' said he, 'or who is it that rifle, and ransom, and make prisoners, in these forests?'

'You may look at their cassocks close by,' said Wamba, 'and see whether they be thy children's coats or no—for they are as like thine own as one green peacod is to another.'

'I will learn that presently,' answered Locksley; 'and I

charge ye, on peril of your lives, not to stir from the place where ye stand, until I have returned.'

So saying, he unbuckled his baldric with the bugle, took a feather from his cap, and gave them to Wamba; then drew a vizard from his pouch, and, repeating his charges to them to stand fast, went to execute his purposes of reconnoitring.

He returned in the course of a few minutes. 'Friend Gurth,' he said, 'I have mingled among yon men, and have learnt to whom they belong, and whither they are bound; you are both servants, and, as I think, faithful servants, of Cedric the Saxon. He shall not want English hands to help him in this extremity. Come then with me, until I gather more aid.'

So saying, he walked through the wood at a great pace, followed by the Jester and the swineherd, and after three hours' good walking arrived at a small opening in the forest, in the centre of which grew an oak tree of enormous magnitude. Beneath this tree four or five yeomen lay stretched on the ground.

'Disperse,' said Locksley, 'and seek your companions. Collect what force you can, for there's game afoot that must be hunted hard, and will turn to bay. Meet me here by day-break.—And, stay,' he added, 'Two of you must take the road quickly towards Torquilstone, the Castle of Front-de-Bœuf. A set of gallants, who have been masquerading in such guise as our own, are carrying a band of prisoners thither—Watch them, for, even if they reach the castle before we collect our force, our honour is concerned to punish them, and we will find means to do so.'

They promised implicit obedience, and departed with alacrity on their different errands. In the meanwhile, their leader and his two companions pursued their way to the Chapel of Copmanhurst.

When they had reached the little moonlight glade, the anchorite and his guest were performing, at the full extent of their very powerful lungs, an old drinking song, and it was some time before Locksley's loud and repeated knocks at length disturbed them.

'By my beads,' said the hermit, stopping short in a grand flourish, 'here come more benighted guests. I would not for my cowl that they found us in this goodly exercise; so, while I remove these pewter flagons, to drown the clatter strike into the tune which thou hearest me sing; it is no matter for the words—I scarce know them myself.'

So saying, he struck up a thundering *De profundis clamavi*, under cover of which he removed the apparatus of their banquet; while the knight, laughing heartily and arming himself all the while, assisted his host with his voice from time to time as his mirth permitted.

'What devil's matins are you after at this hour?' said a voice from without. 'Open to Locksley!'

'All's safe—all's right,' said the hermit.

'But who is he?' said the Black Knight.

'Who is he?' answered the hermit; 'a friend.'

'But what friend?' answered the knight; 'for he may be friend to thee and none of mine.'

'What friend?' replied the hermit; 'that, now, is one of the questions that is more easily asked than answered.

What friend?—why, he is, now that I bethink me a little, the very same honest keeper I told thee of a while since.'

'Ay, as honest a keeper as thou art a pious hermit,' replied the knight, 'I doubt it not. But undo the door before he beat it from its hinges.'

The hermit speedily unbolted his portal, and admitted Locksley with his two companions.

'Why, hermit,' was the yeoman's question as soon as he beheld the knight, 'what boon companion hast thou here?'

'A brother of our order,' replied the friar, shaking his head; 'we have been at our orisons all night.'

'He is a monk of the church militant, I think,' answered Locksley; 'and there be more of them abroad. I tell thee, friar, thou must lay down the rosary and take up the quarter-staff; we shall need every one of our merry men, whether clerk or layman.—But,' he added, 'Sir Knight—you are he who decided the victory to the advantage of the English against the strangers at Ashby.'

'And what follows if you guess truly, good yeoman?' replied the knight.

'I should in that case hold you,' replied the yeoman, 'a friend to the weaker party.'

'Such is the duty of a true knight at least,' replied the Black Champion; 'and I would not that there were reason to think otherwise of me.'

'But for my purpose,' said the yeoman, 'thou shouldst be as well a good Englishman as a good knight.'

'You can speak to no one,' replied the knight, 'to whom England, and the life of every Englishman, can be dearer than to me.'

'I would willingly believe so,' said the woodsman, 'for never had this country such need to be supported by those who love her. Hear me! A band of villains, in the disguise of better men than themselves, have made themselves master of the person of a noble Englishman, called Cedric the Saxon, together with his ward, and his friend Athelstane of Coningsburgh. Wilt thou aid in their rescue?'

'I am bound by my vow to do so,' replied the knight; 'but I would willingly know who you are?'

'I am,' said the forester, 'a nameless man; but I am the friend of my country and of my country's friends. Believe, however, that my word when pledged, is as inviolate as if I wore golden spurs.'

'I willingly believe it,' said the knight; ' I have been accustomed to study men's countenances, and I can read in thine honesty and resolution. I will, therefore, ask thee no further questions, but aid thee in setting at freedom these oppressed captives.'

Meanwhile, the following dialogue took place between the two leaders of the supposed banditti:—

'It is time thou shouldst leave us, Sir Maurice,' said the Templar to De Bracy, 'in order to prepare the second part of thy mystery. Thou art next, thou knowest, to act the Knight Deliverer.'

'I have thought better of it,' said De Bracy; 'I will not leave thee till the prize is fairly deposited in Front-de-Bœuf's castle. There will I appear before the Lady Rowena and trust that she will set down to the vehemence of my passion the violence of which I have been guilty.'

'I care not for your blue-eyed beauty,' said the Templar. 'There is in that train one who will make me a better mate.'

'By the mass, thou meanest the fair Jewess!' said De Bracy.

'And if I do,' said he, 'who shall gainsay me?'

'No one that I know,' said De Bracy, 'unless it be your vow of celibacy, or a check of conscience.'

'For my vow,' said the Templar, 'our Grand Master hath granted me a dispensation. And for my conscience, a man that hath slain three hundred Saracens, need not reckon up every little failing, like a village girl at her first confession upon Good Friday eve.'

They soon stood before the gate of Front-de-Bœuf's castle. De Bracy winded his horn three times, and the archers and cross-bow men, who had manned the wall upon seeing their approach, hastened to lower the draw-bridge, and admit them. The prisoners were compelled to alight, and Lady Rowena was separated from her train, and conducted to a distant apartment. The same alarming distinction was conferred on Rebecca, in spite of her father's entreaties. 'Base unbeliever,' answered one of his guards, 'when thou hast seen thy lair, thou wilt not wish thy daughter to partake it.' And, without farther discussion, the old Jew was forcibly dragged off in a different direction from the other prisoners.

CHAPTER XII

The poor Jew had been hastily thrown into a dungeon-vault of the castle, the floor of which was deep beneath the level of the ground and very damp, being lower than even the moat itself.

At one end of this ghastly apartment was a large fire-grate, over the top of which were stretched some transverse iron bars, half devoured with rust.

Isaac sat in a corner of his dungeon for nearly three hours, at the expiry of which, steps were heard on the dungeon stair. The bolts screamed as they were withdrawn—the hinges creaked as the wicket opened, and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, followed by the two Saracen slaves of the Templar, one of them carrying a pair of scales, entered the prison.

'Most accursed dog of an accursed race,' he said, 'seest thou these scales?'

The unhappy Jew returned a feeble affirmative.

'In these very scales shalt thou weigh me out,' said the relentless Baron, 'a thousand silver pounds.'

'I swear to you, noble knight,' said the Jew, 'by all which I believe——'

'Perjure not thyself,' said the Norman, interrupting him, 'and let not thine obstinacy seal thy doom. Think not I speak to thee only to excite thy terror, and practise on the base cowardice thou hast derived from thy tribe. I swear to thee by that which thou dost NOT believe, by

the gospel which our church teaches, that my purpose is deep and peremptory.'

He made a signal for the slaves to approach, and the Saracens came forward with a quantity of charcoal, a pair of bellows, and a flask of oil. While the one struck a light with a flint and steel, the other disposed the charcoal in the large rusty grate which we have already mentioned, and exercised the bellows until the fuel glowed red.

'Seest thou Isaac,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'the range of iron bars above that glowing charcoal?—on that warm couch thou shalt lie, stripped of thy clothes as if thou wert to rest on a bed of down. One of these slaves shall maintain the fire beneath thee, while the other shall anoint thy wretched limbs with oil, lest the roast should burn.—Now choose betwixt such a scorching bed and the payment of a thousand pounds of silver. I waste no more words with thee—choose between thy dross and thy flesh and blood, and as thou choosest, so shall it be.'

'So may Abraham, Jacob, and all the fathers of our people assist me,' said Isaac, 'I cannot make the choice, because I have not the means of satisfying your exorbitant demand!'

'Seize him and strip him, slaves,' said the knight, 'and let the fathers of his race assist him if they can.'

The assistants, taking their directions more from the Baron's eye and his hand than his tongue, once more stepped forward, laid hands on the unfortunate Isaac, plucked him up from the ground, and holding him between them, waited the hard-hearted Baron's further signal. The unhappy Jew eyed their countenances and

that of Front-de-Bœuf, then looked at the glowing furnace, over which he was presently to be stretched, and seeing no change of his tormentor's relenting, his resolution gave way.

'I will pay,' he said, 'the thousand pounds of silver—That is,' he added, after a moment's pause, 'I will pay it with the help of my brethren; for I must beg as a mendicant at the door of our synagogue ere I make up so unheard-of a sum.—When and where must it be delivered?'

'Here,' replied Front-de-Bœuf, 'here it must be delivered—weighed it must be—weighed and told down on this very dungeon floor.—Thinkest thou I will part with thee until thy ransom is secure?'

The Jew groaned deeply.—'Grant me,' he said, 'at least, with my own liberty, that of the companions with whom I travel. Let my daughter Rebecca go forth to York, with your safe conduct, noble knight, and so soon as man and horse can return, the treasure shall be told down on this very floor.'

'Thy daughter!' said Front-de-Bœuf, as if surprised,—'By heavens, Isaac, I would I had known of this. I gave her to be a handmaiden to Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert.

'Robber and villain!' said the Jew with passion, which he now found it impossible to bridle, 'I will pay thee nothing—not one silver penny will I pay thee unless my daughter is delivered to me in safety and honour!'

'Art thou in thy senses, Israelite?' said the Norman, sternly—'have thy flesh and blood a charm against heated iron and scalding oil?'

'I care not!' said the Jew, rendered desperate by paternal affection; 'do thy worst. My daughter is my flesh and blood, dearer to me a thousand times than those limbs which thy cruelty threatens. No silver will I give thee, unless I were to pour it molten down thy avaricious throat—no, not a silver penny will I give thee, Nazarene, were it to save thee from the deep damnation thy whole life has merited. Take my life, if thou wilt, and say the Jew, amidst his tortures, knew how to disappoint the Christian.'

'We shall see that,' said Front-de-Bœuf.—'Strip him, slaves, and chain him down upon the bars.'

In spite of the feeble struggles of the old man, the Saracens had already torn from him his upper garment, and were proceeding totally to disrobe him, when the sound of a bugle, twice winded without the castle, penetrated even to the recesses of the dungeon, and immediately after, loud voices were heard calling for Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf. Unwilling to be found engaged in his hellish occupation, the savage Baron gave the slaves a signal to restore Isaac's garment, and quitted the dungeon with his attendants.

Meanwhile Rebecca awaited her fate in a distant and sequestered turrret. Hither she had been led, and found herself in the presence of an old sibyl, who kept murmuring to herself a Saxon rhyme, as if to beat time to her spindle.

'What devil's deed have they now in the wind?' said the old hag, 'but it is easy to guess why they sent her to this lone turret, whence a shriek could no more be heard

than at the depth of five hundred fathoms beneath the earth. Outlandish, too,' she said, marking the dress and turban of Rebecca— 'What country art thou of? a Saracen? or an Egyptian?—Why dost not answer?—thou canst weep, canst thou not speak?'

'Be not angry, good mother,' said Rebecca.

'Thou needest say no more,' replied Urfried; 'men know a fox by the train, and a Jewess by her tongue.'

'For the sake of mercy,' said Rebecca, 'tell me what I am to expect.'

'The presence of the mother of God were no protection,' answered the old woman.

She left the room as she spoke, her features writhed into a sort of sneering laugh, and locked the door behind her.

Rebecca's first care was to inspect the apartment; but it afforded few hopes either of escape or protection. The door had no inside bolt or bar. The single window opened upon an embattled space surmounting the turret, which gave her, at first sight, some hopes of escaping; but she soon found it had no communication with any part of the battlements. She trembled, however, and changed colour, when a step was heard on the stair, and the door of the turret chamber slowly opened, and a tall man slowly entered, and shut the door behind him. She had already unclasped two costly bracelets and a collar, which she hastened to proffer to the supposed outlaw.

'Take these,' she said, 'good friend, and for God's sake be merciful to me and my aged father!'

'Fair flower of Palestine,' replied the outlaw, 'ever since

I have taken up this wild trade, I have made a vow to prefer beauty to wealth.'

'Thou art no outlaw,' said Rebecca, 'no outlaw had refused such offers. No outlaw in this land uses the dialect in which thou hast spoken. Thou art no outlaw, but a Norman!'

'And thou who canst guess so truly,' said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, dropping the mantle from his face, 'art no true daughter of Israel, but in all, save youth and beauty, a very witch of Endor. I am not an outlaw, then, fair rose of Sharon. And I am one who will be more prompt to hang thy neck and arms with pearls and diamonds, which so well become them, than to deprive thee of these ornaments.'

'What wouldst thou have of me,' said Rebecca, 'if not my wealth?—We can have nought in common between us—you are a Christian—I am a Jewess.—Our union were contrary to the laws alike of the church and the synagogue.'

The eyes of the Templar flashed fire at this reproof—'Hearken,' he said, 'Rebecca, thou art the captive of my bow and spear—subject to my will by the laws of all nations; nor will I abate an inch of my right, or abstain from taking by violence what thou refusest to entreaty or necessity.'

'Stand back,' said Rebecca—'stand back, and hear me.'

As she spoke, she threw open the latticed window, and in an instant after stood on the very verge of the parapet, with not the slightest screen between her and the tremen-

dous depth below. Unprepared for such a desperate effort, Bois-Guilbert had neither time to intercept nor stop her. As he offered to advance, she exclaimed, 'Remain where thou art, proud Templar, or at thy choice advance!—one foot nearer, and I plunge myself from the precipice.'

The Templar hesitated, and a resolution which had never yielded to pity or distress, gave way to his admiration of her fortitude. 'Come down,' he said, 'rash girl!—I swear by earth and sea and sky, I will offer thee no offence.'

'I will not trust thee, Templar,' said Rebecca.

'You do me injustice,' exclaimed the Templar fervently; 'I swear to you by the name which I bear—by the cross on my bosom—by the sword on my side—by the ancient crest of my fathers do I swear, I will do thee no injury whatsoever! if not for thyself, yet for thy father's sake forbear! I will be his friend, and in this castle he will need a powerful one.'

'Alas!' said Rebecca, 'I know it but too well—dare I trust thee?'

'May my arms be reversed, and my name dishonoured,' said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, 'if thou shalt have reason to complain of me! Many a law, many a commandment have I broken, but my word never.'

'I will then trust thee,' said Rebecca, 'thus far;' and she descended from the verge of the battlement, but remained standing close by one of the embrasures, or *machicolles*, as they were then called.—'Here,' she said, 'I take my stand. Remain where thou art.'

While Rebecca spoke thus, her high and firm resolve gave to her looks, air, and manner, a dignity that seemed more than mortal. Her glance quailed not, her cheek blanched not, for the fear of a fate so instant and so horrible; on the contrary, the thought that she had her fate at her command gave a yet deeper colour of carnation to her complexion, and a yet more brilliant fire to her eye. Bois-Guilbert, proud himself and high-spirited, thought he had never beheld beauty so animated and so commanding.

'Let there be peace between us,' he said.

'Peace, if thou wilt,' answered Rebecca—'Peace—but with this space between.'

'Thou needst no longer fear me,' said Bois-Guilbert.

'I fear thee not,' replied she; 'thanks to him that reared this dizzy tower so high that nought could fall from it and live—thanks to him, and to the God of Israel!—I fear thee not.'

'Thou dost me injustice,' said the Templar; 'by earth, sea and sky, thou dost me injustice; I am not naturally that which you have seen me, hard, selfish, and relentless.—But that bugle-sound announces something which may require my presence. Think on what I have said.—Farewell!—I do not say forgive me the violence I have threatened, for it was necessary to the display of thy character. I will soon return and hold further conference with thee.'

CHAPTER XIII

When the Templar reached the hall of the castle, he found De Bracy already there. 'Your love-suit,' said De Bracy, 'Hath, I suppose, been disturbed, like mine, by this obstreperous summons.'

'But where is Front-de-Bœuf?' asked the Templar.

'He is negotiating with the Jew, I suppose,' replied De Bracy, coolly; 'probably the howls of Isaac have drowned the blast of the bugle.'

They were soon after joined by Front-de-Bœuf.

'Let us see the cause of this cursed clamour,' he said—'here is a letter, and if I mistake not, it is in Saxon.'

'Give it to me,' said the Templar. 'We have that of the priestly character, that we have some knowledge to enlighten our valour.'

The Templar accordingly read it as follows:—

'I, Wamba, the son of Witless, Jester to a noble and free-born man, Cedric of Rotherwood, called the Saxon.—And I, Gurth, the son of Beowulph, swineherd unto the said Cedric, do you, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, to wit, that whereas you have wrongfully and by mastery seized upon our lord and master the said Cedric; also the Lady Rowena; also Athelstane of Coningsburgh; also certain serfs, their born bondsmen; also a certain Jew, named Isaac of York, together with his daughter, a Jewess, and certain horses and mules; therefore we do require and demand that the said persons, together with

all goods and chattels to them pertaining, be, within a hour after the delivery hereof, delivered to us, untouched and unharmed in body and goods. Failing of which, we do pronounce to you, that we hold ye as robbers and traitors, and will wager our bodies against ye in battle, siege, or otherwise,'

The knights heard this uncommon document read from end to end, and then gazed upon each other in silent amazement, as being utterly at a loss to know what it could portend. De Bracy was the first to break silence by an uncontrollable fit of laughter, wherein he was joined, though with more moderation, by the Templar. Front-de-Bœuf, on the contrary, seemed impatient of their ill-timed jocularity.

'I give you plain warning,' he said, 'fair sirs, that you had better consult how to bear youselves under these circumstances than give way to such misplaced merriment.—Here, fellow,' he added, to one of his attendants, 'hast thou sent out to see by what force this precious challenge is to be supported?'

'There are at least two hundred men assembled in the woods,' answered the squire.

'Here is a proper matter!' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'this comes of lending you the use of my castle?'

'Thou dost not fear,' said the Templar, 'that they have force sufficient to attempt the castle?'

'Not so, Sir Brian,' answered Front-de-Bœuf. 'Without machines, scaling ladders, and experienced leaders, my castle may defy them.'

'Then send to York, and recall our people,' said De

Bracy. 'If they abide the shaking of my standard, or the sight of my Free Companions, I will give them credit for the boldest outlaws ever bent bow in greenwood.'

'And who shall bear such a message?' said Front-de-Bœuf; 'they will beset every path, and rip the errand out of his bosom.—I have it,' he added, after pausing for a moment—'Sir Templar, thou canst write as well as read. Thou shalt return an answer to this bold challenge.'

'I would rather do it at the sword's point than at that of the pen,' said Bois-Guilbert; 'but be it as you will.'

He sat down accordingly, and indited, in the French language, an epistle of the following tenor;—

'Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, receives no defiances at the hands of slaves, bondsmen, or fugitives. Touching the prisoners we have made, we do in Christian charity require you send a man of religion to receive their confession and reconcile them with God; since it is our fixed intention to execute them this morning before noon.'

About three arrow-flights distant from the castle, Wamba and Gurth, with their allies the Black Knight and Locksley and the jovial hermit, awaited with impatience an answer to their summons. Around, and at a distance from them, were seen many a bold yeoman. More than two hundred had already asssembled, and others were fast coming in.

It was to the leaders of this motley army that the letter of the Templar was now delivered.

Reference was at first made to the chaplain for an exposition of its contents.

'By the crook of St. Dunstan,' said that worthy, 'I swear that I cannot expound unto you this jargon.'

'I must be clerk, then,' said the Black Knight; and taking the letter, he first read it over to himself, and then explained the meaning in Saxon.

'Execute the noble Cedric!' exclaimed Wamba; 'by the rood, thou must be mistaken, Sir Knight.'

'Not I, my worthy friend,' replied the Knight; 'I have explained the words as they are here.'

''Tis but a contrivance to gain time,' said Locksley; 'they dare not do such a deed.'

'I would,' said the Black Knight,'there were some one among us who could obtain admission into the castle, and discover how the case stands with the beseiged.'

All look on each other, and were silent.

'I see,' said Wamba, after a short pause, 'that the fool must still be the fool, and put his neck in the venture which wise men shrink from.'

'Hath he sense enough, think'st thou?' said the Black Knight, addressing Gurth.

'I know not,' said Gurth; 'but if he hath not, it will be the first time he hath wanted wit to turn his folly to account.'

'On with the frock, then, good fellow,' quoth the Knight, 'and let thy master send us an account of their situation within the castle. Time Wears!'

The harebrained self-conceit which had emboldened Wamba to undertake this dangerous office was scarce sufficient to support him when he found himself in the presence of a man so dreadful, and so much dreaded, as

The Anchorite's Song.

'Seest thou, Isaac,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'the range of iron bars above that glowing charcoal?'

Reginald Front-de-Bœuf. But Front-de-Bœuf was accustomed to see men of all ranks tremble in his presence, so that the timidity of the supposed father did not give him any cause of suspicion. 'Who and whence art thou, priest?' said he.

'*Pax vobiscum*!' reiterated the Jester, 'I am a poor servant of St. Francis, who, travelling through this wilderness, have fallen among thieves, which have sent me unto this castle in order to do my ghostly office on two persons condemned by your honourable justice.'

'Ay, right,' answered Front-de-Bœuf; 'and canst thou tell me, holy father, the number of those banditti?'

'Gallant sir,' answered the Jester, 'I conceive they may be at least five hundred men.'

'What!' said the Templar, who came into the hall at that moment, 'muster the wasps so thick here? it is time to stifle such a mischievous brood.' Then taking Front-de-Bœuf aside, he added, 'Knowest thou the priest?'

'He is a stranger from a distant convent,' said Front-de-Bœuf; 'I know him not.'

'Then trust him not with thy purpose in words,' answered the Templar. 'Let him carry a written order to De Bracy's company of Free Companions, to repair instantly to their master's aid. In the meantime, and that the shaveling may suspect nothing, permit him to go freely about his task of preparing these Saxon hogs for the slaughter-house.'

'It shall be so,' said Front-de-Bœuf. And he forthwith appointed a domestic to conduct Wamba to the apart-

ment where Cedric and Athelstane were confined.

'*Pax vobiscum*!' said the Jester, entering the apartment.

'Enter freely,' answered Cedric to the supposed friar; 'with what intent art thou come hither?'

'To bid you prepare yourselves for death,' answered the Jester.

'It is impossible!' replied Cedric, starting. 'Hearest thou this, Athelstane? we must rouse up our hearts to this last action, since better it is we should die like men than live like slaves.'

'I am ready,' answered Athelstane, 'and shall walk to my death with as much composure as ever I did to my dinner.'

'Let us then unto our holy gear,' said Cedric.

'Wait yet a moment, good uncle,' said the Jester, in his natural tone.

'By my faith,' said Cedric, 'I know that voice.'

'It is that of your trusty slave and jester,' answered Wamba, throwing back his cowl. 'Had you taken advice formerly, you would not have been here at all. Take a fool's advice now, and you will not be here long.'

'How meanest thou, knave?' answered the Saxon.

'Even thus,' replied Wamba. 'Take thou this frock and cord, which are all the orders I ever had, and march quietly out of the castle, leaving me your cloak and girdle to take the long leap in thy stead.'

'Leave thee in my stead!' said Cedric astonished at the proposal; 'why, they would hang thee, my poor knave.'

'E'en let them do as they are permitted,' said Wamba.

'Go, noble Cedric,' said Athelstane, 'your presence

without may encourage friends to our rescue—your remaining here will ruin us all.'

'And is there any prospect, then, of rescue from without?' said Cedric, looking at the Jester.

'Prospect, indeed!' echoed Wamba; 'let me tell you, when you fill my cloak, you are wrapped in a general's cassock. Five hundred men are there without, and I was this morning one of their chief leaders. Well, we shall see what good they will make by exchanging a fool for a wise man. And so farewell, master, and be kind to poor Gurth and his dog Fangs; and let my cockscomb hang in the hall at Rotherwood.'

The tears stood in Cedric's eyes. 'Thy memory shall be preserved,' he said, 'while fidelity and affection have honour upon earth. But that I trust I shall find the means of saving Rowena, and thee, Athelstane, and thee also, my poor Wamba, thou shouldst not overbear me in this.'

The exchange of dress was now accomplished, when a sudden doubt struck Cedric.

'I know no language,' he said, 'but my own, and a few words of their mincing Norman. How shall I bear myself like a reverend brother?'

'The spell lies in two words,' replied Wamba—*Pax vobiscum* will answer all queries. It is as useful to a friar as a broomstick to a witch, or a wand to a conjurer. Speak it but thus, in a deep grave tone,—*Pax vobiscum*!—it is irresistible.'

'If such prove the case,' said his master, 'my religious orders are soon taken—*Pax vobiscum*. I trust I shall remember the pass-word. Noble Athelstane, farewell; and fare-

well, my poor boy. I will save you, or return and die with you.'

'Farewell, noble Cedric,' said Athelstane.

'Farewell, uncle,' added Wamba; 'and remember *Pax vobiscum*.'

Thus exhorted, Cedric sallied forth upon his expedition; and it was not long ere he had occasion to try the force of the spell. In a low-arched and dusky passage, by which he endeavoured to work his way to the hall of the castle, he was interrupted by a female form.

'*Pax vobiscum*!' said the pseudo friar, and was endeavouring to hurry past, when a soft voice replied, '*Et vobis—quæso, domine reverendissime*.'

'May the fiend fly away with me,' began Cedric impatiently, when the colloquy was interrupted by the harsh voice of Urfried.

'How, minion,' said she to the female speaker, 'is this manner in which you require the kindness which permitted thee to leave thy prison-cell?'

'Come this way, father,' said the old hag, 'thou art a stranger in this castle, and canst not leave it without a guide. Come hither, for I would speak with thee.—And you, daughter of an accursed race, go to the sick man's chamber, and tend him.'

When Urfried had with clamours and menaces driven Rebecca back, she said in a tone rather asserting a fact than asking a question, 'Thou art Saxon, father—Deny it not, the sounds of my native language are sweet to mine ears. Can the wrinkled decrepit hag before thee forget she was once the daughter of the noble thane

of Torquilstone, before whose frown a thousand vassals trembled?'

'Thou the daughter of Torquil Wolfganger!' said Cedric, receding as he spoke; 'thou—thou—the daughter of that noble Saxon, my father's friend!'

'Thy father's friend!' echoed Urfried; 'then Cedric called the Saxon stands before me. But if thou art Cedric, why this religious dress?'

'It matters not who I am,' said Cedric; 'proceed, unhappy woman, with thy tale of horror and guilt!'

'Guess it, but ask it not.—Here have I dwelt, till age, premature age, has stamped its ghastly features on my countenance—scorned and insulted where I was once obeyed; but thou thyself shalt say, that whatever was the life of Urfried, her death well became the daughter of noble Torquil. There is a force without beleaguering this accursed castle—hasten to lead them to the attack, and when thou shalt see a red flag wave from the turret on the eastern angle of the donjon, press the Normans hard—they will then have enough to do within, and you may win the wall in spite both of bow and mangonel.—Begone, follow thine own fate and leave me to mine.'

As she thus spoke, she vanished through a private door, and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf entered the apartment.

'Thou seest, Sir Friar,' he said, 'yon herd of Saxon swine. Tell them whatever thou hast a mind of the weakness of this fortalice, or aught else that can detain them before it for twenty-four hours. Meantime bear thou this scroll to the castle of Philip de Malvoisin; say it cometh from me, and that I pray him to send it to York with all the speed

man and horse can make. Meanwhile, tell him to doubt nothing, he shall find us whole and sound behind our battlement.'

'By my patron saint,' said Cedric, with deeper energy than became his character, 'your commands shall be obeyed! Not a Saxon shall stir from before these walls, if I have art and influence to detain them.'

Front-de-Bœuf, in the meanwhile, led the way to a postern, which communicated with the open field by a well-fortified sallyport.

'Begone, then; and if thou wilt do mine errand, and if thou return hither when it is done, thou shalt see Saxon flesh cheap as ever was hog's in the shambles of Sheffield.'

'Assuredly we shall meet again,' answered Cedric.

'Something in hand the whilst,' continued the Norman; and, as they parted at the postern door, he thrust into Cedric's reluctant hand a gold byzant, adding, 'Remember, I will flay off both cowl and skin, if thou failest in thy purpose.'

'And full leave will I give thee to do both,' answered Cedric, 'if when we meet next, I deserve not better at thine hand;' and he threw the piece of gold towards the donor.

Front-de-Bœuf heard the words imperfectly, but the action was suspicious—'Archers,' he called, 'send me an arrow through yon monk's frock!—yet stay, we must thus far trust him since we have no better shift. Ho! Giles, jailer, bring Cedric of Rotherwood before me, and the other churl.'

His commands were obeyed; and the two Saxon captives appeared under the guard of four dependents. Front-de-Bœuf took a long draught of wine, and then addressed his prisoners,—

'Gallants of England, how relish ye your entertainment at Torquilstone? By God and St. Dennis, an ye pay not rich ransom, I will hang ye up by the feet from the iron bars of these windows, till the kites and hooded crows have made skeletons of you!—Speak out, ye Saxon dogs—what bid ye for your worthless lives?'

'Not a doit I,' answered poor Wamba, 'my brain has been topsy-turvy ever since the biggin was bound first round my head; so turning me upside down may peraventure restore it again.'

'Saint Genevieve!' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'what have we got here?'

And with the back of his hand, he struck Cedric's cap from the head of the Jester, and throwing open his collar, discovered the fatal badge of servitude, the silver collar round his neck.

'Giles—dogs and varlets!' exclaimed the furious Norman, 'what have you brought me here?'

'I think I can tell you,' said De Bracy, who just entered the apartment. 'This is Cedric's clown, who fought so manful a skirmish with Isaac of York about a question of precedence.'

'I shall settle it for them both,' replied Front-de-Bœuf; 'they shall hang on the same gallows, unless his master and this boar of Coningsburgh will pay well for their lives—Go,' said he to two of his attendants, 'fetch me the

right Cedric hither, and I pardon your error for once; the rather that you but mistook a fool for a Saxon franklin.'

'Ay, but,' said Wamba, 'your chivalrous excellency will find there are more fools than franklins.'

'What means the knave?' said Front-de-Bœuf.

'Saints of Heaven!' exclaimed De Bracy, 'he must have escaped in the monk's garments!'

'Fiends of hell!' echoed Front-de-Bœuf, 'it was then the boar of Rotherwood whom I ushered to the postern, and dismissed with my own hands!' The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Brother Ambrose, a monk in attendance upon the Prior of Jorvaulx.

'Holy Mother!' said the monk, as he addressed the assembled knights, 'I am at last safe and in Christian keeping.'

'Safe thou art,' replied De Bracy: 'and for Christianity, here is the stout Baron Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, whose utter abomination is a Jew; and the good Knight Templar, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whose trade is to slay Saracens.'

'Ye are friends and allies of our reverend father in God, Prior Aymer,' said the monk; 'He is in the hands of the men of Belial, infesters of these woods.'

'Here is a new argument for our swords, sirs,' said Front-de-Bœuf, turning to his companions; but the demonstration of the enemy's immediate approach cut off all farther discourse.

CHAPTER XIV

Rebecca, in compliance with the wishes of Ivanhoe, made that attempt to bring Cedric into the wounded Knight's chamber, which was defeated, as we have already seen, by the interference of Urfried, and Rebecca retired to communicate to Ivanhoe the result of her errand.

They had not much leisure to regret the failure of this source of intelligence, for the noise within the castle now increased into tenfold bustle and clamour.

Ivanhoe was like the war-horse, glowing with impatience at his inactivity and with his ardent desire to mingle in the affray. 'If I could but drag myself,' he said, 'to yonder window, that I might see how this brave game is like to go—If I had but bow to shoot a shaft, or battle-axe to strike were it but a single blow for our deliverance!—It is in vain—it is in vain—I am alike nerveless and weaponless!'

'Fret not thyself, noble knight,' answered Rebecca, 'the sounds have ceased of a sudden—it may be they join not battle.'

'Thou knowest nought of it,' said Ivanhoe, impatiently; 'this dead pause only shows that the men are at their posts on the walls, and expecting an instant attack; what we have heard was but the distant muttering of the storm—it will burst anon in all its fury.—Could I but reach yonder window!'

'Thou wilt but injure thyself by the attempt, noble knight,' she said; 'I myself will stand at the lattice, and describe to you what passes.'

'You must not—you shall not!' exclaimed Ivanhoe; 'each lattice, each aperture, will be soon a mark for the archers; some random shaft——'

'It shall be welcome!' murmered Rebecca.

'Rebecca, dear Rebecca!' exclaimed Ivanhoe, 'this is no maiden's pastime—do not expose thyself to wounds and death, and render me for ever miserable for having given the occasion; at least show as little of your person at the lattice as may be.'

Following the directions of Ivanhoe, Rebecca, with tolerable security to herself, could witness part of what was passing without the castle, and report to him the preparations for the storm.

'The skirts of the wood,' she said, 'seem lined with archers, although only a few are advanced from its dark shadow.'

'Under what banner?' asked Ivanhoe.

'Under none which I can observe,' answered Rebecca.

'A singular novelty,' muttered the knight, 'to advance to storm such a castle without pennon or banner displayed!—Seest thou who act as leaders?'

'A knight, clad in sable armour, is the most conspicuous,' said the Jewess.

'What device does he bear on his shield?'

'Something resembling a bar of iron and a padlock painted blue on the black shield.'

'A fetterlock and shaklebolt azure,' said Ivanhoe;

'I know not who may bear the device, but well I ween it might now be mine own. Canst thou not see the motto?'

'Scarce the device itself at this distance,' replied Rebecca; 'but when the sun glances fair upon his shield, it shows as I tell you.'

Her description was here suddenly interrupted by the signal for assault, which was given by the blast of a shrill bugle, and at once answered by a flourish of the Norman trumpets from the battlements, which, mingled with the deep and hollow clang of the nakers (a species of kettle-drum), retorted in notes of defiance the challenge of the enemy.

'And I must lie here like a bedridden monk,' exclaimed Ivanhoe, 'while the game that gives me freedom or death is played out by the hand of others!—Look from the window once again, kind maiden, but beware that you are not marked by the archers.'

With patient courage, Rebecca again took post at the lattice, sheltering herself, however, so as not to be visible from beneath.

'What dost thou see, Rebecca?' again demanded the wounded knight.

'Nothing but the cloud of arrows flying so thick as to dazzle mine eyes, and to hide the bowmen who shoot.'

'That cannot endure,' said Ivanhoe; 'if they press not right on to carry the castle by pure force of arms, the archery may avail but little against stone walls and bulwarks. Look for the Knight of the Fetterlock, and see how he bears himself.'

'I see him not,' said Rebecca.

'Foul craven!' exclaimed Ivanhoe; 'does he blench from the helm when the wind blows highest?'

'He blenches not! he blenches not!' said Rebecca; 'I see him now; he heads a body of men close under the outer barrier of the barbican.—They pull down the piles and palisades; they hew down the barriers with axes.—His high black plume floats abroad over the throng, like a raven over the field of the slain.—They have made a breach in the barriers—they rush in—they are thrust back!—Front-de-Bœuf heads the defenders; I see his gigantic form above the press. God of Jacob!'

She turned her head from the lattice, as if unable longer to endure a sight so terrible.

'Look forth again, Rebecca,' said Ivanhoe, mistaking the cause of her retiring; 'the archery must in some degree have ceased, since they are now fighting hand to hand.—Look again; there is now less danger.'

Rebecca again looked forth, and almost immediately exclaimed: 'Holy prophets of the law! Front-de-Bœuf and the Black Knight fight hand to hand on the breach.' She then uttered a loud shriek, and exclaimed, 'He is down—he is down!'

'Who is down?' cried Ivanhoe.

'The Black Knight,' echoed Rebecca, faintly. 'But no!—the name of the Lord of Hosts be blessed!—he is on foot again, and fights as if there were twenty men's strength in his single arm. His sword is broken—he snatches an axe from a yeoman—he presses Front-de-Bœuf with blow on blow—The giant stoops and totters like

an oak under the steel of the woodman—he falls—he falls!'

'Front-de-Bœuf?' exclaimed Ivanhoe.

'Front-de-Bœuf!' answered the Jewess. 'His men rush to the rescue, headed by the haughty Templar—their united force compels the champion to pause—they drag Front-de-Bœuf within the walls.'

'The assailants have won the barriers, have they not?' said Ivanhoe.

'They have—they have!' exclaimed Rebecca; 'and they press the beseiged hard upon the outer wall. Some plant ladders, some swarm like bees, and endeavour to ascend upon the shoulder of each other—down go stones, beams, and trunks of trees upon their heads, and as fast as they bear the wounded to the rear, fresh men supply their places in the assault—Great God! The ladders are thrown down; the soldiers lie grovelling under them like crushed reptiles—The besieged have the better.'

'Saint George strike for us!' exclaimed the knight; 'do the false yeomen give way?'

'No!' exclaimed Rebecca, 'they bear themselves right yeomanly—the Black Knight approaches the postern with his huge axe—the thundering blows which he deals, you may hear above all the din and shouts of the battle—stones and beams are hailed down on him but he regards them no more than if they were thistle-down or feathers!'

'By Saint John of Acre,' said Ivanhoe, raising himself joyfully on his couch, 'methought there was but one man

in England that might do such a deed!'

'The postern gate shakes,' continued Rebecca; 'it crashes—it is splintered by his blows—they rush in—the out-work is won—Oh, God!—they hurl the defenders from the battlements—they throw them into the moat. O men, if ye be indeed men, spare them that can resist no longer!'

'The bridge—the bridge which communicates with the castle—have they won that pass?' exclaimed Ivanhoe.

'No,' replied Rebecca, 'the Templar has destroyed the plank on which they crossed, but our friends strengthen themselves within the out-work which they have mastered.'

When the outwork was carried, the Sable Knight sent notice of the happy event to Locksley, requesting him at the same time, to keep such a strict watch on the castle as might prevent the defenders from combining their force for a sudden sally.

The Knight employed the interval in causing to be constructed a long raft, by means of which he hoped to cross the moat in despite of the resistance of the enemy. This was a work of some time, which the leaders the less regretted, as it gave Urfried leisure to execute her plan of diversion in their favour, whatever that might be.

When the raft was completed, the Black Knight said, 'In the name of God, fling open the door, and launch the floating bridge.'

The portal, which led from the inner wall of the barbican to the moat, and which corresponded with a sally-

port in the main wall of the castle, was now suddenly opened; the temporary bridge was then thrust forward, extending its length between the castle and outwork. Well aware of the importance of taking the foe by surprise, the Black Knight, closely followed by Cedric, threw himself upon the bridge, and reached the opposite side. Here he began to thunder with his axe upon the gate of the castle, protected in part from the shot and stones cast by the defenders by the ruins of the former drawbridge.

'Shame on ye all,' cried De Bracy to the soldiers around him; 'do ye call yourselves cross-bowmen, and let these two dogs keep their station under the walls of the castle?—Heave over the coping-stones from the battlement, an better may not be—Get pickaxe and levers, and down with that huge pinnacle!' pointing to a piece of the parapet.

At this moment the besiegers caught sight of the red flag upon the angle of the tower which Urfried had described to Cedric. Locksley was the first who was aware of it, as he was hasting to the outwork, impatient to see the progress of the assault.

'Saint George!' he cried, 'Merry Saint George for England!—To the charge, bold yeomen!—the castle is ours, we have friends within—See yonder flag, it is the appointed signal—Torquilstone is ours!'

With that he bent his good bow, and set a shaft right through the breast of one of the men-at-arms, who, under De Bracy's direction, was loosening a fragment from one of the battlements to precipitate on the heads of Cedric

and the Black Knight. The men-at-arms were daunted, for no armour seemed proof against the shot of this tremendous archer.

'Do you give ground, base knaves!' said De Bracy—'Give me the lever.'

And, snatching it up, he again assailed the loosened pinnacle, which already tottered, and he still heaved at his task, and would have accomplished it, had not the voice of the Templar sounded close in his ear.

'All is lost, De Bracy, the castle burns. Lead thy men down, as if to a sally; throw the postern-gate open—There are but two men who occupy the float, fling them into the moat, and push across to the barbican. I will charge from the main-gate and attack the barbican on the outside.'

'It is well thought upon,' said De Bracy; 'I will play my part—Templar, thou wilt not fail me?'

'Hand and glove, I will not!' said Bois-Guilbert. 'But haste thee, in the name of God.'

De Bracy hastily drew his men together and rushed down to the postern gate, which he caused instantly to be thrown open. But scarce was this done ere the portentous strength of the Black Knight forced his way inward in despite of De Bracy and his followers. Two of the foremost instantly fell, and the rest gave way.

'Dogs!' said De Bracy, 'will ye let *two* men win our only pass for safety?'

'He is the devil!' said a veteran man-at-arms.

'And if he be the devil,' replied De Bracy, 'would you fly from him into the mouth of hell?—the castle burns

behind us, villains!—let despair give you courage, or let me forward, I will cope with this champion myself.'

The vaulted passages to which the postern gave entrance, and in which these two redoubted champions were now fighting hand to hand, rang with the furious blows which they dealt each other, De Bracy with his sword, the Black Knight with his ponderous axe. At length the Norman received a blow, which descended with such violence on his crest that he measured his length on the paved floor.

'Yield thee, De Bracy,' said the Black Champion, stooping over him, and holding against the bars of his helmet the poniard with which the knights despatched their enemies (and which was called the dagger of mercy).

'I will not yield,' replied De Bracy, faintly, 'to an unknown conqueror. Tell me thy name, or work thy pleasure on me—it shall never be said that Maurice de Bracy was a prisoner to a nameless churl.'

The Black Knight whispered something.

'I yield me to be true prisoner, rescue or no rescue,' answered the Norman.

'Go to the barbican,' said the victor, in a tone of authority, 'and there wait my further orders.'

'Yet first, let me say,' said De Bracy, 'what it imports thee to know. Wilfred of Ivanhoe is wounded and a prisoner, and will perish in the burning castle.'

'Wilfred of Ivanhoe!' exclaimed the Black Knight—'prisoner, and perish!—The life of every man in the castle shall answer if a hair of his head is singed—Show me his chamber!'

'Ascend yonder winding stair,' said De Bracy; 'it leads to his apartment.'

As the fire augmented, symptoms of it had become apparent in the chamber where Ivanhoe was watched and tended by the Jewess, Rebecca. At length the volumes of smoke which rolled into the apartment—the cries for water, which were heard even above the din of the battle, made them sensible of the progress of this new danger.

'The castle burns,' said Rebecca; 'it burns!—What can we do to save ourselves?'

'Fly, Rebecca, and save thine own life,' said Ivanhoe, 'for no human aid can avail me.'

'I will not fly,' answered Rebecca; 'we will be saved or perish together—And yet, Great God!—my father, my father—what will be his fate!'

At this moment the door of the apartment flew open, and the Templar presented himself,—a ghastly figure, for his gilded armour was broken and bloody, and the plume was partly shorn away, partly burnt from his casque. 'I have found thee,' said he to Rebecca; 'thou shalt prove I will keep my sword to share weal and woe with thee—There is but one path to safety, I have cut my way through fifty dangers to point it to thee—up, and follow me.'

'Alone,' answered Rebecca, 'I will not follow thee. If thou wert born of woman—if thou hast but a touch of human charity in thee—thy heart be not as hard as thy breastplate—save my aged father—save this wounded knight!'

'A knight,' answered the Templar, with his characteristic calmness, 'a knight, Rebecca, must encounter his fate, whether it meet him in the shape of a sword or flame—and who recks how or where a Jew meets with his?'

'Savage warrior,' said Rebecca, 'rather will I perish in the flames than accept safety from thee!'

'Thou shalt not choose, Rebecca—once didst thou foil me, but never mortal did so twice.'

So saying, he seized on the terrified maiden, and bore her out of the room in his arms in spite of her cries, and without regarding the menaces and defiance which Ivanhoe thundered against him.

'I had not found thee, Wilfred,' said the Black Knight, who at that instant entered the apartment 'but for thy shouts.'

'If thou be'st true knight,' said Wilfred, 'think not of me—pursue yon ravisher—save the Lady Rowena—look to the noble Cedric!'

'In their turn,' answered he of the Fetterlock, 'but thine is first.'

And seizing Ivanhoe, he bore him off with as much ease as the Templar had carried off Rebecca.

Meanwhile Cedric had rushed in quest of Rowena, and was so fortunate as to reach his ward's apartment just as she had abandoned all hopes of safety. He committed her to the charge of Gurth, and then hastened in quest of Athelstane, determined, at every risk to himself, to save that last scion of Saxon royalty. But ere Cedric penetrated as far as the old hall in which he had himself

been a prisoner, the inventive genius of Wamba had procured liberation for himself and his companion in adversity.

When the noise of the conflict announced that it was at the hottest, the Jester began to shout, with the utmost power of his lungs, 'Saint George and the dragon!—Bonny Saint George for merry England!—The castle is won!' And these sounds he rendered yet more fearful by banging against each other two or three pieces of rusty armour.

The guard, whose spirits were already in a state of alarm, took fright at Wamba's clamour, and leaving the door open behind them, ran to tell the Templar that foemen had entered the old hall. Meantime the prisoners found no difficulty in making their escape into the court of the castle, which was now the last scene of the contest. Here sat the fierce Templar, on horseback, surrounded by several of the garrison both on horse and foot. The drawbridge had been lowered by his orders, but the passage was beset; for the archers no sooner saw the flames breaking out, and the bridge lowered, than they thronged to the entrance, as well to prevent the escape of the garrison, as to secure their own share of booty ere the castle should be burnt down.

Animated, however, by despair, and supported by the example of their indomitable leader, the remaining soldiers of the castle fought with the utmost valour. Rebecca, placed on horseback before one of the Templar's Saracen slaves, was in the midst of the party; and Bois-Guilbert, notwithstanding the confusion of the fray,

showed every attention to her safety.

Athelstane, who was slothful, but not cowardly, beheld the female form whom the Templar protected thus sedulously, and doubted not that it was Rowena whom the knight was carrying off.

'By the soul of Saint Edward,' he said, 'I will rescue her from yonder over-proud knight, and he shall die by my hand!'

To snatch a mace from the pavement—to rush on the Templar's band, and to strike in quick succession to the right and left, levelling a warrior at each blow, was, for Athelstane's great strength, now animated with unusual fury, but the work of a single moment; he was soon within two yards of Bois-Guilbert, whom he defied in his loudest tone.

'Dog!' said the Templar, grinding his teeth, 'I will teach thee to blaspheme the holy Order of the Temple of Zion!' and with these words, half-wheeling his steed, he discharged a fearful blow upon the head of Athelstane, and levelled him with the earth.

'*Ha! Beau-seant*!' exclaimed Bois-Guilbert, 'thus be it to the maligners of the Temple-knights!' Taking advantage of the dismay which was spread by the fall of Athelstane, and calling aloud, 'Those who would save themselves, follow me!' he pushed across the drawbridge, dispersing the archers who would have intercepted them.

The fire was spreading rapidly through the castle, when Urfried, who had first kindled it, appeared on the turret, in the guise of one of the ancient furies, yelling forth a war-song, such as was of yore raised on the field

of battle by the scalds of the yet heathen Saxons. At length with a terrific crash, the whole turret gave way, and she perished in the flames which had consumed her tyrant.

CHAPTER XV

The outlaws were all assembled around the Trysting-tree in the Harthill-walk, computing the heaps of plunder, which were indeed very large; for, notwithstanding that much was consumed, a great deal of plate, rich armour, and splendid clothing, had been secured and brought into one common mass to be at the disposal of their leader.

Locksley assumed his seat—a throne of turf erected under the twisted branches of the huge oak—and the silvan followers were gathered around him. He assigned to the Black Knight a seat at his right hand, and to Cedric a place on his left.

'Noble Cedric,' he said, turning to the Saxon, 'that spoil is divided into two portions; do thou make choice of that best suits thee, to recompense thy people who were partakers with us in this adventure.'

'Good yeoman,' said Cedric, 'my heart is oppressed with sadness. The noble Athelstane of Coningsburgh is no more. My people do but tarry my presence to transport his honoured remains to their last mansion. I should, therefore, ere now have left this place. I waited but to render my thanks to thee and to thy bold yeomen, for the life and honour you have saved.—But thou, my poor knave,' he added, turning about and embracing his Jester, 'how shall I reward thee, who feared not to give thy body to chains and death instead of mine.'

'Nay,' said the Jester, extricating himself from his master's caress, 'if you pay my service with the water of your eye, the Jester must weep for company, and then what becomes of his vocation?—But, uncle, if you would indeed pleasure me, I pray you to pardon Gurth, who stole a week from your service to bestow it on your son.'

'Pardon him!' exclaimed Cedric; 'I will both pardon and reward him.—Kneel down, Gurth.'—The swineherd was in an instant at his master's feet—'THEOW and ESNE art thou no longer,' said Cedric, touching him with a wand: 'FOLKFREE and SACLESS art thou in town and from town, in the forest as in the field.'

No longer a serf, but a freeman and a landholder, Gurth sprang upon his feet.

'A smith and a file,' he cried 'to do away the collar from the neck of a freeman!—Noble master! doubled is my strength by your gift, and doubly will I fight for you!—There is a free spirit in my breast—I am a man.'

Cedric, ere they departed, expressed his peculiar gratitude to the Black Champion, and earnestly entreated him to accompany him to Rotherwood.

'I know,' he said, 'that war is a changeful mistress, and a home is sometimes desirable even to the champion whose trade is wandering. Thou hast earned one in Rotherwood, noble knight.'

'Cedric has already made me rich,' said the Knight,—'he has taught me the value of Saxon virtue. To Rotherwood will I come, brave Saxon, and that speedily; but,

as now, pressing matters of moment detain me from your halls. Peradventure, when I come thither, I will ask such a boon as will put even thy generosity to the test.'

'It is granted ere spoken out,' said Cedric,—'it is granted already, were it to affect half my fortune!'

'Gage not thy promise so lightly,' said the Knight of the Fetterlock; 'yet well I hope to gain the boon I shall ask.'

'Valiant Knight,' said Locksley to the Black Champion, 'without whose good heart and mighty arm our enterprise must altogether have failed, will it please you to take from that mass of spoil whatever you best serve to pleasure you?'

'I accept the offer,' said the Knight, 'and I ask permission to dispose of Sir Maurice de Bracy.'

'He is thine already,' said Locksley, 'and well for him! else the tyrant had graced the highest bough of this oak.'

'De Bracy,' said the Knight, 'thou art free—depart. He whose prisoner thou art, scorns to take mean revenge for what is past. But beware of the future, I say BEWARE!'

While they thus spoke, a loud shout among the yeomen announced the arrival of the Friar.

'Make room, my merry men!' he exclaimed; 'room for your godly father and his prisoner.'—And making his way through the ring, amidst the laughter of all around, he appeared in majestic triumph, his huge partisan in one hand, and in the other a halter, one end of which was fastened to the neck of the unfortunate Isaac of York.

'Curtal Priest,' said the Captain, 'in the name of Saint

Nicholas, whom hast thou got here?'

'A captive to my sword and to my lance, noble Captain,' replied the Clerk; 'to my bow and to my halberd, I should rather say; and yet I have redeemed him by my divinity from a worse captivity. Speak, Jew—have I not ransomed thee from Sathanas?—Did I not spend the whole night in drinking to thee, and in expounding of mysteries?'

'May I so find mercy in your eyes,' said the Jew, 'as I know not one word which the reverend prelate spake to me all this fearful night.'

'Nay,' said the Friar, 'if thou dost retract vows made in the holy Church, thou must do penance.'

Accordingly, he raised his halberd, and would have laid the staff of it lustily on the Jew's shoulders, had not the Black Knight stopped the blow, and thereby transferred the Holy Clerk's resentment to himself.

'Truly, friend,' said the Friar, clenching his huge fist, 'I will bestow a buffet on thee.'

'I accept no such presents,' said the Knight; 'I am content to take thy cuff as a loan, but I will repay thee with usury.'

'Hola!' cried the Captain, 'brawling beneath our Trysting-tree?'

'No brawling,' said the Knight, 'it is but a friendly interchange of courtesy. Friar, strike an thou darest, I will stand thy blow if thou wilt stand mine.'

'Thou hast the advantage with that iron pot on thy head,' said the churchman; 'but have at thee—Down thou goest an thou wert Goliath of Gath.'

The Friar bared his brawny arm up to the elbow, and putting his full strength to the blow, gave the knight a buffet that might have felled an ox. But his adversary stood firm as a rock. A loud shout was uttered by all the yeoman around; for the Clerk's cuff was proverbial amongst them.

'Now, Priest,' said the Knight, pulling off his gauntlet, 'if I had vantage on my head, I will have none on my hand—stand fast as a true man.'

But who may resist his fate? The buffet of the Knight was given with such strength and good-will, that the Friar rolled head over heels upon the plain, to the great amazement of all the spectators. But he arose neither angry nor crest-fallen.

'Brother,' said he to the Knight, 'there is my hand, in friendly witness that I will exchange no more cuffs with thee, having been a loser by the barter. End now all unkindness. Let us put the Jew to ransom, since the leopard will not change his spots, and a Jew he will continue to be.'

'Peace all,' said the Captain. 'And thou, Jew, think of thy ransom, while I examine a prisoner of another cast. Here cometh the worthy prelate, as pert as a pyet.' And, between two yeomen, was brought before the silvan throne of the Outlaw Chief our friend, Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx.

The captive Prior's features and manners exhibited a whimsical mixture of offended pride and deranged foppery and bodily terror.

'Why, how now, my masters?' said he, with a voice in

which all three emotions were blended. 'What Order is this among ye?—what ransom am I to pay for walking on Watling-street without having fifty men at my back?'

'Were it not well,' said the Lieutenant of the gang apart to the Captain, 'that the Prior should name the Jew's ransom, and the Jew name the Prior's?'

'Thou art a mad knave,' said the Captain, 'but thy plan transcends!—Here, Jew, step forth—Look at that holy Father, Prior of the rich Abbey of Jorvaulx, and say at what ransom we should hold him!'

'An six hundred crowns,' said Isaac.

'Six hundred crowns,' said the leader gravely; 'I am contented—thou hast well spoken, Isaac—six hundred crowns.—It is a sentence, Sir Prior.'

'A sentence!—a sentence!' exclaimed the band.

'Ye are mad, my masters', said the Prior; 'where am I to find such a sum?'

'If so please you,' said Isaac, willing to curry favour with the outlaws, 'I can send for the six hundred crowns out of certain moneys in my hands.'

'The Prior shall judge of that matter,' replied the Captain.—'But how say you, Father Aymer? Can the Jew himself afford a good ransom?'

'*Can* he afford a ransom?' answered the Prior—I tell you openly that ye will wrong yourselves if you take from him a penny under a thousand crowns.'

'A sentence!—a sentence!' said the Chief Outlaw.

'A sentence!—a sentence!' shouted his assessors; 'the Christian has shown his good nurture, and dealt with us more generously than the Jew.'

'The God of my fathers help me!' said the Jew; 'I am this day childless, and will ye deprive me of the means of livelihood?'

'Friends,' said the Chief, looking round, 'the old man is but a Jew, natheless his grief touches me. Deal uprightly with us, Isaac—We will take thee at the same ransom with Prior Aymer, or rather at one hundred crowns lower, which hundred crowns shall be mine own peculiar loss; and thou wilt have six hundred crowns to treat for thy daughter's ransom.—Prior Aymer,' he continued, 'come apart with me under this tree. Here is Isaac willing to give thee one hundred marks of silver, if thy intercession with thine ally the Templar shall procure this ransom.'

'The matter,' quoth the Prior, 'is of a mixed condition; for, if I do a good deed on the one hand, yet, on the other, it goeth to the vantage of Jew, and in so much is against my conscience. Yet, if the Israelite will advantage the Church by giving me somewhat over to the building of our dortour, I will take it on my conscience to aid him in this.'

'For a score of marks to the dortour,' said the Outlaw, 'we will not stand with you.'

The Prior sat down, and at a great leisure indited an epistle to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, and having carefully sealed up the tablets, delivered them to the Jew, saying, 'This will be thy safe-conduct to the Preceptory of Templestowe, and is most likely to accomplish the delivery of thy daughter.'

But the Prior's expectation was terribly disappointed,

for when the Jew drew near to the presence of the Grand Master at Templestowe, and explained he had business with Brian de Bois-Guilbert—

'And what is thy business with Brian de Bois-Guilbert?' asked the Grand Master.

'I am bearer of this letter,' stammered out the Jew, 'so please your reverend valour, to that good knight from Prior Aymer of the Abbey of Jorvaulx.'

The Grand Master took the letter and perused it in haste, with an expression of surprise and horror; read it over again more slowly; then holding it out exclaimed—'Here is goodly stuff for one Christian man to write to another, and both members, and no inconsiderable members, of religious professions!' Then turning to Isaac, he said, 'Thy daughter, then, is prisoner with Brian de Bois-Guilbert?'

'Ay, reverend valorous sir,' stammered poor Isaac.

'Peace!' said the Grand Master. 'Hath not thy daughter practised the art of healing?'

'Ay, gracious sir,' answered the Jew, with more confidence ; 'by a balsam of marvellous virtue.'

'Where had she that secret?' said Beaumanoir.

'It was delivered to her,' answered Isaac, reluctantly, 'by Miriam, a sage matron of our tribe.

'Ah, false Jew!' said the Grand Master; 'was it not from the same witch Miriam, the abomination of whose enchantments have been heard of throughout every Christian land? Her body was burnt at a stake; and so be it with me and mine Order, if I do not as much to her pupil,and more also! I will teach her to throw a spell

and incantation over the soldiers of the blessed Temple.—
There, spurn this Jew from the gate—shoot him dead if
he oppose or turn again. With his daughter we will deal
as the Christian law and our own high office warrant.'

CHAPTER XVI

The ponderous castle-bell had tolled the point of noon, when Rebecca heard a trampling of feet upon the private stair which led to her place of confinement. The noise announced the arrival of several persons, and the circumstance rather gave her joy; for she was more afraid of the solitary visits of the fierce and passionate Bois-Guilbert than of any evil that could befall her besides. The door of the chamber was unlocked, and Conrad and the Preceptor Malvoisin entered, attended by four warders.

'Daughter of an accursed race!' said the Preceptor, 'arise and follow us.'

'Whither,' said Rebecca, 'and for what purpose?'

'Damsel,' answered Conrade, 'it is not for thee to question, but to obey. Nevertheless, be it known to thee, that thou art to be brought before the tribunal of the Grand Master of our holy Order.'

'May the God of Abraham be praised!' said Rebecca, folding her hands devoutly; 'the name of a judge, though an enemy to my people, is to me as the name of a protector.'

They descended the stair with slow and solemn step, traversed a long gallery, and entered the great hall in which the Grand Master had for the time established his court.

The lower part of this ample apartment was filled with

So saying, he seized the terrified maiden, and bore her out of the room in his arms in spite of her cries.

The Jew names the Prior's ransom.

squires and yeomen, who made way not without some difficulty for Rebecca. As she passed through them, her arms folded and her head depressed, a scrap of paper was thrust into her hand, which she received almost unconsciously, and continued to hold without examining its contents. But the assurance that she possessed some friend in this awful assembly gave her courage to look around.

On a seat directly before the accused, sat the Grand Master of the Temple, in full and ample robes of flowing white, holding in his hand the mystic staff, which bore the symbol of the Order. At his feet was placed a table, occupied by two scribes, chaplains of the Order, whose duty it was to reduce to formal record the proceedings of the day. The Preceptors, of whom there were four present, occupied seats lower in height, and somewhat drawn back behind that of their superior. The remaining and lower part of the hall was filled with guards and with other attendants whom curiosity had drawn thither, to see at once a Grand Master and a Jewish sorceress.

'Reverend and valiant men, Knights, Preceptors, and Companions of this Holy Order,' said the Grand Master, 'we have summoned to our presence a Jewish woman, by name Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York—a woman infamous for sortileges and for witcheries; whereby she hath maddened the blood, and besotted the brain, not of a churl, but of a Knight—not of a secular Knight, but of one devoted to the service of the Holy Temple—not of a Knight Companion, but of a Preceptor of our Order,

first in honour as in place. Stand forth, therefore, and bear witness, ye who have witnessed these unhappy doings, that we may judge of the sum and bearing thereof; and judge whether our justice may be satisfied with the punishment of this infidel woman, or if we must go on, with a bleeding heart, to the further proceeding against our brother.'

Several witnesses were called upon to prove the risks to which Bois-Guilbert exposed himself in endeavouring to save Rebecca from the blazing castle, and his neglect of his personal defence in attending to her safety.

'Were it not well, brethren,' said the Grand Master, 'that we examine something into the former life and conversation of this woman, specially that we may discover whether she be one likely to use magical charms and spells? Let those who have aught to witness of the life and conversation of this Jewish woman, stand forth before us.' It then appeared that there was in the crowd a bedridden man, whom the prisoner had restored to the perfect use of his limbs, by a miraculous balsam.

The poor peasant, a Saxon by birth, was dragged forward to the bar, terrified at the penal consequences which he might have incurred by the guilt of having been cured of the palsy by a Jewish damsel. Perfectly cured he certainly was not, for he supported himself forward on crutches to give evidence. Most unwilling was his testimony, and given with many tears; but at York, he was suddenly afflicted with a sore disease, and had been unable to stir from his bed until the remedies applied by

Rebecca's directions had in some degree restored him to the use of his limbs.

'What is thy name, fellow?' said the Grand Master.

'Higg, the son of Snell,' answered the peasant.

'Then Higg, son of Snell,' said the Grand Master, 'I tell thee it is better to be bedridden than to accept the benefit of unbelievers' medicine.'

Higg, the son of Snell, withdrew into the crowd, but, interested in the fate of his benefactress, lingered until he should learn her doom, even at the risk of again encountering the frown of that severe judge, the terror of which withered his very heart.

The Grand Master now in a solemn tone demanded of Rebecca what she had to say against the sentence of condemnation, which he was about to pronounce.

'To invoke your pity,' said the lovely Jewess, with a voice somewhat tremulous with emotion, 'would, I am aware, be as useless as I should hold it mean. I will not therefore return the charge brought against me—but to himself—Yes, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, to thyself I appeal, whether these accusations are not false?'

There was a pause; all eyes turned to Brian de Bois-Guilbert. He was silent.

'Speak,' she said, 'if thou art a man—if thou art a Christian, speak!—I conjure thee, by the habit which thou dost wear—by the name thou dost inherit—by the knighthood thou dost vaunt—by the honour of thy mother—by the tomb of thy father—I conjure thee to say, are these things true?'

'Answer her, brother,' said the Grand Master, 'if the

Enemy with whom thou dost wrestle will give thee power.'

In fact, Bois-Guilbert seemed agitated by contending passions, which almost convulsed his features and it was with a constrained voice that at last he replied, looking to Rebecca,—'The scroll! the scroll!'

'Ay,' said Beaumanoir, 'this is indeed testimony! The victim of her witcheries can only name the fatal scroll, the spell inscribed on which is, doubtless, the cause of his silence.'

But Rebecca put another interpretation on the words, and glancing her eye upon the slip of parchment which she continued to hold in her hand, she read written thereupon in the Arabian character, *Demand a champion!*

'There is yet one chance of life left to me,' she said, 'even by your own fierce laws. I deny this charge—I challenge the privilege of trial by combat.'

'And who, Rebecca,' replied the Grand Master, 'will lay lance in rest for a sorceress? who will be the champion of a Jewess?'

'God will raise me up a champion,' said Rebecca—'It cannot be that in merry England—the hospitable, the generous, the free, where so many are ready to peril their lives for honour, there will not be found one to fight for justice. There lies my gage.'

She took her embroidered glove from her hand, and flung it down before the Grand Master with an air of mingled simplicity and dignity, which excited universal surprise and admiration.

'Give me her glove,' said Beaumanoir. 'This is indeed,' he continued, as he looked at the flimsy texture and slender fingers, 'a slight and frail gage for a purpose so deadly.'

'Albert Malvoisin, give this gage of battle to Brian de Bois-Guilbert.—It is our charge to thee, brother,' he continued, addressing himself to Bois-Guilbert, 'that thou do thy battle manfully, nothing doubting that the good cause shall triumph.—And do thou, Rebecca, attend, that we assign thee the third day from the present to find a champion.'

'That is but brief space,' answered Rebecca, 'for a stranger, who is also of another faith, to find one who will do battle, waging life and honour for her cause, against an approved knight.'

'We may not extend it,' said the Grand Master.

'God's will be done, then,' said Rebecca; 'I put my trust in Him, to whom an instant is as effectual to save as a whole age.'

'Thou hast spoken well, damsel,' said the Grand Master; 'but well know we who can array himself like an angel of light. It remains but to name a fitting place of combat, and, if it so hap, also of execution. I hold the fittest to be the lists of Saint George belonging to this Preceptory, and used by us for military exercise. Rebecca, in those lists shalt thou produce thy champion; and if thou failest to do so, or if thy champion shall be discomfited by the judgment of God, thou shalt then die the death.'

Rebecca spoke not, but she looked up to heaven, and,

folding her hands, remained for a minute without change of attitude. She then modestly reminded the Grand Master that she ought to be permitted some opportunity of free communication with her friends.

'It is just and lawful,' said the Grand Master; 'choose what messenger thou shalt trust, and he shall have free communication with thee.'

'Is there,' said Rebecca, 'any one here, who, either for love of a good cause or for ample hire, will do the errand of a distressed being?'

All were silent; for none thought it safe, in the presence of the Grand Master, to avow any interest in the calumniated prisoner.

Rebecca stood for a few moments in indescribable anxiety, and then exclaimed, 'Is it really thus?—And, in English land, am I to be deprived of the poor chance of safety which remains to me, for want of an act of charity which would not be refused to the worst criminal?'

Higg, the son of Snell, at length replied, 'I am but a maimed man, but that I can at all stir or move was owing to her charitable assistance.—I will do thine errand to repair the mischief done by my tongue. Alas! when I boasted of thy charity, I little thought I was leading thee into danger!'

'God,' said Rebecca, 'is the disposer of all. He can turn the captivity of Judah, even by the weakest instrument. Seek out Isaac of York—here is that will pay for horse and man—let him have this scroll.—I know not if it be of heaven the spirit which inspires me, but most truly do

I judge that I am not to die this death, and that a champion will be raised up for me. Farewell!—Life and death are in thy haste.'

The peasant took the scroll, which contained only a few lines in Hebrew. Many of the crowd would have dissuaded him from touching a document so suspicious; but Higg was resolute in the service of his benefactress. She had saved his body, and he was confident she did not mean to peril his soul. 'I will get me,' he said, 'my neighbour Buthan's good capul, and I will be at York within as brief space as man and beast may.'

But as it fortuned, he had no occasion to go so far, for within a quarter of a mile from the gate of the Preceptory he met with two riders, whom, by their dress and their huge yellow caps, he knew to be Jews; and, on approaching more nearly, discovered that one of them was his ancient employer, Isaac of York, and the other was a physician, Rabbi Ben Samuel. Isaac had but glanced at the scroll, when, uttering a deep groan, he fell from his mule like a dying man.

The Rabbi now dismounted in great alarm, and hastily applied the remedies which his art suggested for the recovery of his companion. But Isaac soon convinced him of his error.

'Child of my sorrow,' he said, 'child of my love!—child of my old age!—oh, Rebecca, daughter of Rachel! the darkness of the shadow of death hath encompassed thee.'

'Yet read the scroll,' said the Rabbi; 'peradventure it may be that we may yet find out a way of deliverance.'

'Do thou read, brother,' answered Isaac, 'for mine eyes are as a fountain of water.'

The physician read, in their native language:—

'To Isaac of York, peace and the blessing of the promise be multiplied unto thee!—My father, I am as one doomed to die for that which my soul knoweth not—even for the crime of witchcraft. My father, if a strong man can be found to do battle for my cause with sword and spear, within the lists of Templestowe, on the third day from this time, peradventure our fathers' God will give him strength to defend the innocent and her who hath none to help her. Wherefore look now what thou doest, and whether there may be any rescue. One Nazarene warrior might indeed bear arms in my behalf, even Wilfred, son of Cedric. But he may not yet endure the weight of his armour. Nevertheless, send the tidings unto him, for he hath favour among the strong men of his people, and he may find some one to do battle for my sake.'

Isaac listened with tolerable composure while Ben Samuel read the letter, and then again resumed the gestures and exclamations of Oriental sorrow, tearing his garments, besprinkling his head with dust, and ejaculating, 'My daughter! my daughter! flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone.'

'Yet,' said the Rabbi, 'take courage, for this grief availeth nothing. Gird up thy loins and seek out this Wilfred, the son of Cedric.'

'I will seek him out,' said Isaac, 'for he is a good youth, and hath compassion for the exile of Jacob.'

They embraced accordingly, and departed on their

several roads.

Meantime a new knock was heard at the door of Rebecca's prison.

'Enter,' she said, 'if thou art a friend; and if a foe, I have not the means of refusing thy entrance.'

'I am,' said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, entering the apartment, 'friend or foe, Rebecca, as the event of this interview shall make me.'

Alarmed at the sight of this man, Rebecca drew backward into the farthest corner of the apartment.

'You have no reason to fear me, Rebecca,' said the Templar; 'or if I must so qualify my speech, you have at least *now* no reason to fear me.'

'I fear you not, Sir Knight,' replied Rebecca, although her short-drawn breath seemed to belie her accents; 'my trust is strong, and I fear thee not.'

'You have no cause,' answered Bois-Guilbert, gravely. 'Within your call are guards, over whom I have no authority. They are designed to conduct you to death, Rebecca, yet would not suffer you to be insulted by any one.'

'What is thy purpose, then, Sir Knight?' said the Jewess; 'speak it briefly.—If thou hast aught to do, save to witness the misery thou hast caused, let me know it; and then, if so it please you, leave me to myself—the step between time and eternity is short, and I have few moments to prepare for it.'

'Your words are bitter, Rebecca,' said Bois-Guilbert, pacing the apartment with impatience, 'but I came not hither to bandy reproaches with you. That scroll which

warned thee to demand a champion, from whom came it, if not from me? In whom else couldst thou have excited such interest?'

'A brief respite from instant death,' said Rebecca, 'which will little avail me—was this all thou couldst do for one whom thou hast brought near even to the verge of the tomb?'

'No, maiden,' said Bois-Guilbert, 'this was *not* all that I purposed. Had it not been for the accursed interference of yon fanatical dotard, the office of the Champion Defender had devolved not on a Preceptor, but on a Companion of the Order. Then I myself—such was my purpose—had on the sounding of the trumpet, appeared in the lists as thy champion, and then, let Beaumanoir have chosen not one, but two or three of the brethren here assembled, I had not doubted to cast them out of the saddle with my single lance. Thus, Rebecca, should thine innocence have been avouched, and to thine own gratitude would I have trusted for the reward of my victory.'

'This, Sir Knight,' said Rebecca, 'is but idle boasting—a brag of what you would have done had you not found it convenient to do otherwise. You received my glove, and my champion, if a creature so desolate can find one, must encounter your lance, yet you would assume the air of friend and protector!'

'Thy friend and protector,' said the Templar, gravely, 'I will yet be—but mark at what risk, or rather at what certainty, of dishonour; and then blame me not if I make my stipulations.'

'Speak,' said Rebecca; 'I understand thee not.'

'If I appear,' said Bois-Guilbert, 'in the fatal lists, thou diest by a slow and cruel death, in pain such as they say is destined to the guilty hereafter. But if I appear not, then I am a degraded and dishonoured knight, I lose fame, I lose honour—And yet, Rebecca,' he added, throwing himself at her feet, 'this greatness will I sacrifice, this fame will I renounce, this power will I forego, even now, if thou wilt receive me for thy lover.'

'Think not of such foolishness, Sir Knight,' answered Rebecca, 'but hasten to the Regent, the throne of England; Richard will listen to my appeal.'

'Never, Rebecca,' said the Templar fiercely. 'If I renounce my Order, for thee alone will I renounce it.—I will not be fooled on all hands.—Stoop my crest to Richard?—Never will I place the Order of the Temple at his feet in my person. I may forsake the Order, I never will degrade or betray it.'

'Now God be gracious to me,' said Rebecca, 'for the succour of man is well-nigh hopeless!'

'It is indeed!' said the Templar; 'for proud as thou art, thou hast in me found thy match. If I enter the lists with my spear in rest, think not any human consideration shall prevent my putting forth my strength; and think then upon thine own fate—Rebecca, it is not in woman to sustain this prospect.'

'Bois-Guilbert,' answered the Jewess, 'thou knowest not the heart of woman. I tell thee, proud Templar, that not in thy fiercest battles hast thou displayed more of thy vaunted courage than has been shown by a woman when

called upon to suffer by affection or duty. Farewell—I waste no more words on thee; the time that remains on earth to the daughter of Jacob must be otherwise spent.'

'We part then thus?' said the Templar, after a pause; 'would to heaven we had never met, or that thou hadst been noble in birth and Christian in faith!'

CHAPTER XVII

When the Black Knight left the Trysting-tree of the generous Outlaw, he held his way straight to a neighbouring religious house, to which the wounded Ivanhoe had been removed, and on the succeeding morning, attended by Ivanhoe, Gurth, and Wamba, he arrived within view of the Castle of Coningsburgh, while the sun was yet on the horizon.

There are few more beautiful or striking scenes in England than are presented by the vicinity of this ancient Saxon fortress. The soft and gentle river Don sweeps through an amphitheatre, in which cultivation is richly blended with woodland, and on a mount, ascending from the river, well defended by walls and ditches, rises this ancient edifice, which, as its Saxon name implies, was, previous to the Conquest, a royal residence of the kings of England.

A huge black banner, which floated from the top of the tower, announced that the obsequies of the late owner were still in the act of being solemnized. It bore no emblem of the deceased's birth or quality, for armorial bearings were then a novelty among the Norman chivalry themselves, and were totally unknown to the Saxons. But above the gate was another banner, on which the figure of a white horse, rudely painted, indicated the nation and rank of the deceased, by the well-known symbol of Hengist and his Saxon warriors.

All around the castle was a scene of busy commotion. Numerous parties were seen ascending and descending the hill on which the castle was situated; and when the Knight and his attendants entered the open and unguarded gates of the external barrier, the space within presented a scene not easily reconciled with the cause of the assemblage. In one place cooks were toiling to roast huge oxen and fat sheep; in another, hogsheads of ale were set abroach, to be drained at the freedom of all comers. Groups of every description were to be seen devouring the food and swallowing the liquor thus abandoned to their discretion.

The mode of entering the great tower of Coningsburgh Castle is very peculiar. A flight of steps, so deep and narrow as to be almost precipitous, leads up to a low portal in the south side of the tower, by which the adventurous antiquary may still, or at least could a few years since, gain access to a small stair within the thickness of the main wall of the tower which leads up to the round apartment which occupies the whole of the third storey from the ground.

There were assembled in this apartment, around a large oaken table, about a dozen of the most distinguished representatives of the Saxon families in the adjacent counties. The downcast and sorrowful looks of these men, their silence and their mournful posture, formed a strong contrast to the levity of the revellers on the outside the castle.

Cedric, seated in equal rank among his countrymen, seemed yet, by common consent, to act as chief of the

assembly. Upon the entrance of the Knight of the Fetterlock, he arose gravely, and gave him welcome by the ordinary salutation, *Waes hael*, raising at the same time a goblet to his head. The Knight returned the greeting with the appropriate words, *Drinc hael.*

'I crave to remind you, noble Thane,' he said, 'that when we last parted, you promised to grant me a boon.'

'It is granted ere named, noble Knight,' said Cedric; 'yet, at this sad moment——'

'Of that also,' said the Knight, 'I have bethought me—but my time is brief. As yet you have known me but as the Black Knight of the Fetterlock—Know me now as Richard Plantagenet.'

'Richard of Anjou!' exclaimed Cedric, stepping backward with the utmost astonishment.

'No, noble Cedric—Richard of England!—whose deepest interest—whose deepest wish, is to see her sons united with each other. Therefore, I require of thee, as a man of thy word, on pain of being held faithless, man-sworn, and nidering, to forgive and receive to thy paternal affection the good knight, Wilfred of Ivanhoe.'

'And this is Wilfred!' said Cedric, pointing to his son.

'My father!—my father!' said Ivanhoe, prostrating himself at Cedric's feet, 'grant me thy forgiveness!'

'Thou hast it, my son,' said Cedric, raising him up 'The son of Hereward knows how to keep his word, even when it has been passed to a Norman. But let me see thee use the dress and costume of thy English ancestry. He that would be the son of Cedric must show himself of

English ancestry.—Thou art about to speak,' he added, sternly, 'and I guess the topic. The Lady Rowena must complete two years' mourning, as for a betrothed husband. The ghost of Athelstane himself would burst his bloody cerements, and stand before us to forbid such dishonour to his memory.'

It seemed as if Cedric's words had raised a spectre; for scarce had he uttered them ere the door flew open, and Athelstane, arrayed in the garments of the grave, stood before them, pale, haggard, and like something arisen from the dead!

The effect of this apparition on the persons present was utterly appalling. Cedric started back as far as the wall of the apartment would permit, and gazed on the figure of his friend with eyes that seemed fixed, and a mouth which he appeared incapable of shutting. Ivanhoe crossed himself, while Richard alternately said, *Benedicite*, and swore, *Mort de ma vie!*

'In the name of God!' said Cedric, addressing what seemed the spectre of his departed friend, 'if thou art mortal, speak!'

'I will,' said the spectre, very composedly, 'when I have collected breath, and when you give me time—Alive, saidst thou?—I am as much alive as he can be who has fed on bread and water for three days. No thanks to the Templar though, whose sword turned in his hand, so that the blade struck me flatlings. But as it was, down I went, stunned indeed, but unwounded. Others of both sides were beaten down and slaughtered above me, so that I never recovered my senses until I found myself in

a coffin—(an open one, by good luck)—placed before the altar of the church of Saint Edmund's. I sneezed repeatedly—groaned—awakened—I dragged myself up stairs as well as a man loaded with shackles, and emaciated with fasting, might; and after much groping about, I was at length directed, by the sound of a jolly roundelay, to the apartment where the worthy Sacristan, an it so please ye, was holding a devil's mass with a huge beetle-browed, broad-shouldered brother of the grey-frock and cowl, who looked much more like a thief than a clergyman. Both stood aghast; but when I knocked down the Sacristan with my fist, the other fellow, his pot-companion, fetched a blow at me with a huge quarter-staff.'

'This must be our Friar Tuck, for a count's ransom,' said Richard, looking at Ivanhoe.

'He may be the devil, an he will,' said Athelstane. 'Fortunately he missed the aim; and on my approaching to grapple with him, took to his heels and ran for it. I failed not to set my own heels at liberty by means of the fetter-key, which hung amongst others at the sexton's belt, pouched some baked meat and a leathern bottle of wine, went to the stable, and found in a private stall my own best palfrey, which, doubtless, had been set apart for the Holy Father Abbot's particular use. Hither I came with all the speed the beast could compass—man and mother's son flying before me wherever I came, taking me for a spectre.'

'And you have found me,' said Cedric, 'ready to resume our brave projects of honour and liberty. Tell this Nor-

man prince, Richard of Anjou, that, lion-hearted as he is, he shall not hold undisputed the throne of Alfred, while a male descendant of the Holy Confessor lives to dispute it.'

'How!' said Athelstane, 'is this the noble King Richard?'

'It is Richard Plantagenet himself,' said Cedric; 'yet I need not remind thee that, coming hither a guest of free-will, he may neither be injured nor detained prisoner—thou well knowest thy duty to him as his host.'

'Ay, by my faith!' said Athelstane; 'and my duty as a subject besides, for I here tender him my allegiance heart and hand.'

'Think on the freedom of England, degenerate Prince!' said Cedric.

'Friend,' said Athelstane, 'a truce to your upbraidings—bread and water and a dungeon are marvellous mortifiers of ambition, and I rise from the tomb a wiser man than I descended into it. I tell you, I will be king in my own domains, and nowhere else.'

'And my ward Rowena,' said Cedric—'I trust you intend not to desert her?'

'Father Cedric,' said Athelstane, 'be reasonable. The Lady Rowena cares not for me—she loves the little finger of my kinsman Wilfred's glove better than my whole person. There she stands to avouch it—Nay, blush not, kinswoman, there is no shame in loving a courtly knight better than a country franklin.—Here, cousin Wilfred of Ivanhoe, in thy favour I renounce and abjure——Hey! by Saint Dunstan, our cousin Wilfred hath vanished!—

Yet, unless my eyes are still dazzled with the fasting I have undergone, I saw him stand there but even now.'

All now looked round and inquired for Ivanhoe, but he had vanished. It was at length discovered that a Jew had been to seek him; and that, after very brief conference, he had called for Gurth and his armour, and had left the castle.

'Fair cousin,' said Athelstane to Rowena, 'could I think that this sudden disappearance of Ivanhoe was occasioned by other than the weightiest reason, I would myself resume——'

But he had no sooner let go her hand, on first observing that Ivanhoe had disappeared, than Rowena, who found her situation extremely embarrassing, had taken the first opportunity to escape from the apartment.

'Certainly,' quoth Athelstane, 'women are the least to be trusted of all animals, monks and abbots excepted. To you I turn, noble King Richard——'

But King Richard was gone also, and no one knew whither. At length it was learned that he had hastened to the court-yard, summoned to his presence the Jew who had spoken with Ivanhoe, and after a moment's speech with him had called vehemently to horse, thrown himself upon a steed, compelled the Jew to mount another, and set off at a rate, which, according to Wamba, rendered the old Jew's neck not worth a penny's purchase.

CHAPTER XVIII

Our scene now returns to the exterior of the Castle, or Preceptory, of Templestowe, about the hour when the bloody die was to be cast for life, as if the whole vicinity had poured forth its inhabitants to a village wake or rural feast. The tiltyard was formed on a piece of ground adjoining to the Preceptory, which had been levelled with care for the exercise of military and chivalrous sports. It occupied the brow of a soft and gentle eminence, was carefully palisaded around, and, as the Templars willingly invited spectators to be witnesses of their skill in feats of chivalry, was amply supplied with galleries and benches.

On the present occasion a throne was erected for the Grand Master at the east end, surrounded with seats of distinction for the Preceptors and Knights.

At the opposite end of the lists was a pile of fagots, so arranged around a stake deeply fixed in the ground, as to leave a space for the victim whom they were destined to consume, to enter within the fatal circle, in order to be chained to the stake by the fetters which hung ready for that purpose.

At length the drawbridge fell, the gates opened, and a knight, bearing the great standard of the Order, sallied from the castle, preceded by six trumpets, and followed by the Knights Preceptors, two and two, the Grand Master coming last. Behind him came Brian de Bois-

Guilbert, armed cap-á-pie in bright armour. He looked ghastly pale, as if he had not slept for several nights, yet reined his pawing war-horse with the habitual ease and grace proper to the best lance of the Order of the Temple.

The unfortunate Rebecca was conducted to the black chair placed near the pile. On her first glance at the terrible spot, she was observed to shudder and shut her eyes, praying internally doubtless, for her lips moved, though no speech was heard. In the space of a minute she opened her eyes, looked fixedly on the pile as if to familiarise her mind with the object, and then slowly and naturally turned away her head.

Meanwhile, the Grand Master had assumed his seat; and Malvoisin, acting as godfather of the champion, stepped forward, and laid the glove of the Jewess, which was the pledge of the battle, at the feet of the Grand Master.

The trumpets then flourished, and a herald, stepping forward, proclaimed aloud—'Here standeth the good Knight, Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, ready to do battle with any knight of free blood, who will sustain the quarrel allowed and allotted to the Jewess Rebecca.' The trumpets again sounded, and there was a dead pause of many minutes.

'No champion appears for the appellant,' said the Grand Master. 'Go, herald, and ask her whether she expects any one to do battle for her in this her cause'. The herald went to the chair in which Rebecca was seated, and said—'Damsel, the Honourable and Rev-

erend the Grand Master demands of thee, if thou art prepared with a champion to do battle this day in thy behalf, or if thou dost yield thee as one justly condemned to a deserved doom?'

'Say to the Grand master,' replied Rebecca, 'that I maintain my innocence, and do not yield me as justly condemned, lest I become guilty of mine own blood. Say to him that I challenge such delay as his forms will permit, to see if God, whose opportunities is in man's extremity, will raise me up a deliverer; and when such uttermost space is passed, may His holy will be done!' The herald retired to carry this answer to the Grand Master.

'God forbid,' said Lucas Beaumanoir, 'that Jew or Pagan should impeach us of injustice!—Until the shadows be cast from the west to the eastward, will we wait to see if a champion shall appear for this unfortunate woman. When the day is so far passed, let her prepare for death.'

Meanwhile the voice of Bois-Guilbert broke upon Rebecca's ear—it was but a whisper, yet it startled her more than the summons of the herald had.

'Rebecca,' said the Templar, 'dost thou hear me?'

'I have no portion in thee, cruel, hard-hearted man,' said the unfortunate maiden.

'Ay, but dost thou understand my words?' said the Templar. 'Hear me, Rebecca, a better chance hast thou for life and liberty than yonder knaves and dotard dream of. Mount thee behind me on my steed—on Zamor, the gallant horse that never failed his rider. Let them speak

the doom which I despise, and erase the name of Bois-Guilbert from their list of monastic slaves! I will wash out with blood whatever blot they may cast on my scutcheon.'

'Tempter,' said Rebecca, 'begone!—Not in this last extremity canst thou move me one hair's-breadth from my resting place—surrounded as I am by foes, I hold thee as my worst and most deadly enemy—avoid thee, in the name of God!'

At this instant a knight, urging his horse to speed, appeared on the plain advancing towards the lists. A hundred voices exclaimed, 'A champion! a champion!' And despite the prepossessions and prejudices of the multitude, they shouted unanimously as the knight rode into the tiltyard. The second glance, however, served to destroy the hope that his timely arrival had excited. His horse, urged for many miles to its utmost speed, appeared to reel from fatigue, and the rider, however undauntedly he presented himself in the lists, either from weakness, weariness, or both, seemed scarce able to support himself in the saddle.

To the summons of the herald, who demanded his rank, his name, and purpose, the stranger knight answered readily and boldly, 'I am a good knight and noble, come hither to sustain with lance and sword the just and lawful quarrel of this damsel, Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York, and to defy Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, as a traitor, murderer, and liar; as I will prove in this field with my body.'

'The stranger must first show,' said Malvoisin, 'that

he is a good knight, and of honourable lineage. The Temple sendeth not forth her champions against nameless men.'

'My name,' said the knight, raising his helmet, 'is better known, my lineage more pure, Malvoisin, than thine own. I am Wilfred of Ivanhoe.'

'I will not fight with thee at present,' said the Templar, in a changed and hollow voice. 'Get thy wounds healed, purvey thee a better horse, and it may be I will hold it worth my while to scourge out of thee this boyish spirit of bravado.'

'Ha, proud Templar,' said Ivanhoe, 'hast thou forgotten that twice didst thou fall before this lance? Remember the lists at Acre—the Passage of Arms at Ashby—thy proud vaunt in the halls of Rotherwood, and the gage of your gold chain against my reliquary. I will proclaim thee, Templar, a coward in every court in Europe—unless thou do battle without further delay.'

Bois-Guilbert turned his countenance irresolutely towards Rebecca, and then exclaimed, looking fiercely at Ivanhoe, 'Dog of a Saxon! take thy lance, and prepare for the death thou hast drawn upon thee!'

'Does the Grand Master allow me the combat?' said Ivanhoe.

'I may not deny what thou hast challenged,' said the Grand Master, 'provided the maiden accepts thee as her champion. Yet I would thou wert in better plight to do battle.'

'Thus—thus I am, and not otherwise,' said Ivanhoe; 'it is the judgement of God—to his keeping I commend

myself.—Rebecca,' said he, riding up to the fatal chair, 'dost thou accept of me for thy champion?'

'I do,' she said—'I do,' fluttered by an emotion which the fear of death had been unable to produce. 'Yet, no—no—thy wounds are uncured—Meet not that proud man—why shouldst thou perish also?'

But Ivanhoe was already at his post, and had closed his visor, and assumed his lance. Bois-Guilbert did the same. The Grand Master, who held in his hand the gage of battle, Rebecca's glove, now threw it into the lists, and pronounced the fatal signal words, *Laissez aller.*

The trumpets sounded, and the knights charged each other in full career. The wearied horse of Ivanhoe, and its no less exhausted rider, went down, as all had expected, before the well-aimed lance and vigorous steed of the Templar. This issue of the combat all had foreseen; but although the spear of Ivanhoe did but, in comparison, touch the shield of Bois-Guilbert, that champion, to the astonishment of all who beheld it, reeled in his saddle, lost his stirrups, and fell in the lists.

Ivanhoe, extracting himself from his fallen horse, was soon on foot, hastening to mend his fortune with his sword; but his antagonist arose not. Wilfred, placing his foot on his breast and the sword's point to his throat, commanded him to yield him, or die on the spot. Bois-Guilber returned no answer.

'Slay him not, Sir Knight,' cried the Grand Master, 'unshriven and unabsolved—kill not body and soul! We allow him vanquished.'

He descended into the lists, and commanded them to

unhelm the conquered champion—he was dead. Unscathed by the lance of his enemy, he had died a victim to the violence of his own contending passions.

'This is indeed the judgement of God,' said the Grand Master, looking upwards—'*Fait voluntas tua!*'

When the first moments of surprise were over, Wilfred of Ivanhoe demanded of the Grand Master, as judge of the field, if he had manfully and rightfully done his duty in the combat?

'Manfully and rightfully hath it been done,' said the Grand Master; 'I pronounce the maiden free and guiltless.'

He was interrupted by a clattering of horses' feet, advancing in such numbers and so rapidly as to shake the ground before them; and the Black Knight galloped into the lists. He was followed by a numerous band of men-at-arms and several knights in complete armour.

'I am too late,' he said, looking around him. 'I had doomed Bois-Guilbert for mine own property.—Ivanhoe, was this well, to take on thee such a venture, and thou scarce able to keep thy saddle?'

'Heaven, my Leige,' answered Ivanhoe, 'hath taken this proud man for its victim. He was not to be honoured in dying as your will had designed.'

'Peace be with him', said Richard, looking steadfastly on the corpse, 'if it may be so—he was a gallant knight, and has died in his steel harness full knightly. But we must waste no time—Bohun, do thine office.

A Knight stepped forward from the King's attendants, and laying his hand on the shoulder of Albert de Malvo-

isin, said, 'I arrest thee of high treason; 'I, Henry Bohun, Earl of Essex, Lord High Constable of England.'

'And he arrests Malvoisin,' said the King, raising his visor, 'by the order of Richard Plantagenet, here present.—Conrade Mont-Fitchet, it is well for thee thou art born no subject of mine.—But for thee, Malvoisin, thou diest with thy brother Philip, ere the world be a week older.

'I will resist thy doom,' said the Grand Master.

'Proud Templar,' said the King, 'thou canst not—look up, and behold the Royal Standard of England that floats over thy towers instead of the Temple banner!—Be wise, Beaumanoir, and make no bootless opposition—Thy hand is in the lion's mouth.'

'I will appeal to Rome against thee,' said the Grand Master, 'for usurpation on the immunities and privileges of our Order.'

'Be it so,' said the King; 'but for thine own sake tax me not with usurpation now. Dissolve thy Chapter, and depart with thy followers to thy next Preceptory (if thou canst find one), which has not been made the scene of treasonable conspiracy against the King of England—Or, if thou wilt, remain to share our hospitality and behold our justice.'

'To be a guest in the house where I should command?' said the Templar; 'never!—Knights, squires, and followers of the Holy Temple, prepare to follow the banner of *Beau-seant*!'

The Grand Master spoke with a dignity which confronted even that of England's king himself, and inspired

courage into his surprised and dismayed followers. They drew together in a dark line of spears, from which the white cloaks of the knights were visible among the dusky garments of their retainers, like the light-coloured edges of a sable cloud.

The Earl of Essex, when he beheld them pause in their assembled force, dashed the rowels into his charger's sides, and galloped backwards and forwards to array his followers in opposition to a band so formidable. Richard alone, as if he loved the danger his presence had provoked, rode slowly along the front of the Templars, calling aloud, 'What, sirs! Among so many gallant knights, will none dare splinter a spear with Richard?'

'The Brethren of the Temple,' said the Grand Master, riding forward in advance of their body, 'fight not on such idle and profane quarrel—and not with thee, Richard of England, shall a Templar cross lance in my presence. The Pope and Princes of Europe shall judge our quarrel, and whether a Christian prince has done well in buckling the cause which thou hast to-day adopted. If unassailed, we depart assailing no one.'

With these words, and without waiting a reply, the Grand Master gave the signal of departure. Their trumpets sounded a wild march of an Oriental character, which formed the usual signal for the Templars to advance. They changed their array from a line to a column of march, and moved off as slowly as their horses could step, as if to show it was only the will of their Grand master, and no fear of the opposing and superior force, which compelled them to withdraw.

Briefly after the judicial combat, Cedric the Saxon was summoned to the court of Richard, which, for the purpose of quieting the counties that had been disturbed by the ambition of his brother, was then held at York. Cedric tushed and pshawed more than once at the message—but he refused not obedience. In fact, the return of Richard had quenched every hope that he had entertained of restoring a Saxon dynasty in England; for, whatever head the Saxons might have made in the event of a civil war, it was plain that nothing could be done under the undisputed dominion of Richard, popular as he was by his personal good qualities and military fame, although his administration was wilfully careless, now too indulgent, and now allied to depotisim.

But, moreover, it could not escape even Cedric's reluctant observation, that his project for an absolute union among the Saxons, by the marriage of Rowena and Athelstane, was now completely at an end, by the mutual dissent of both parties concerned.

Ere he had been a guest at court for seven days, he had given his consent to the marriage of his ward and his son Wilfred of Ivanhoe.

The nuptials of our hero, thus formally approved by his father, were celebrated in the most august of temples, the noble Minster of York. The King himself attended, and from the countenance which he afforded on this and other occasions to the distressed and hitherto degraded Saxons, gave them a safer and more certain prospect of attaining their just rights, than they could reasonably hope from the precarious change of a civil war.

Castles
Monasteries
Forests
Counties
Carlisle
Newcastle
Durham
Lancaster
York
Selby
Beverley
Chester
Lincoln
Stafford
Ashby
Peterborough
Norwich
Ely
Bury St Edmunds
Coventry
Warwick
Ludlow
Worcester
Hereford
Gloucester
Oxford
Bristol
Bath
Glastonbury
Winchester
Exeter
Tintagel
Rochester
Canterbury
Dover

'Mount thee behind me on my steed on Zanor, the gallant horse that never failed his rider.'

The fight in the forest.